



ETIQUETTE
UP TO
DATE

LUCIE HEATON
ARMSTRONG

AUTHOR OF
“LETTERS TO A BRIDE”

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PRESENTED BY

Mr. T. B. Macaulay

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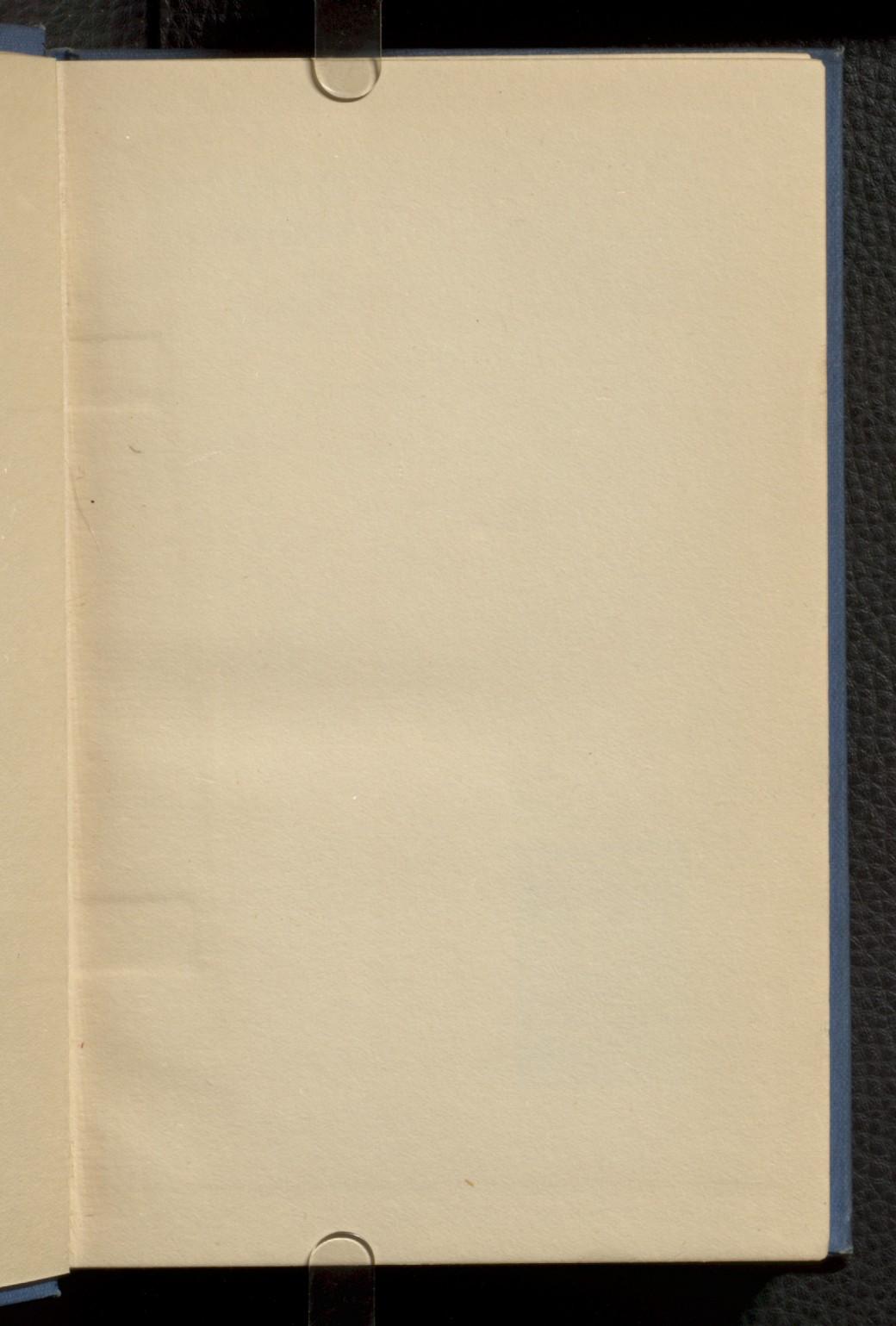
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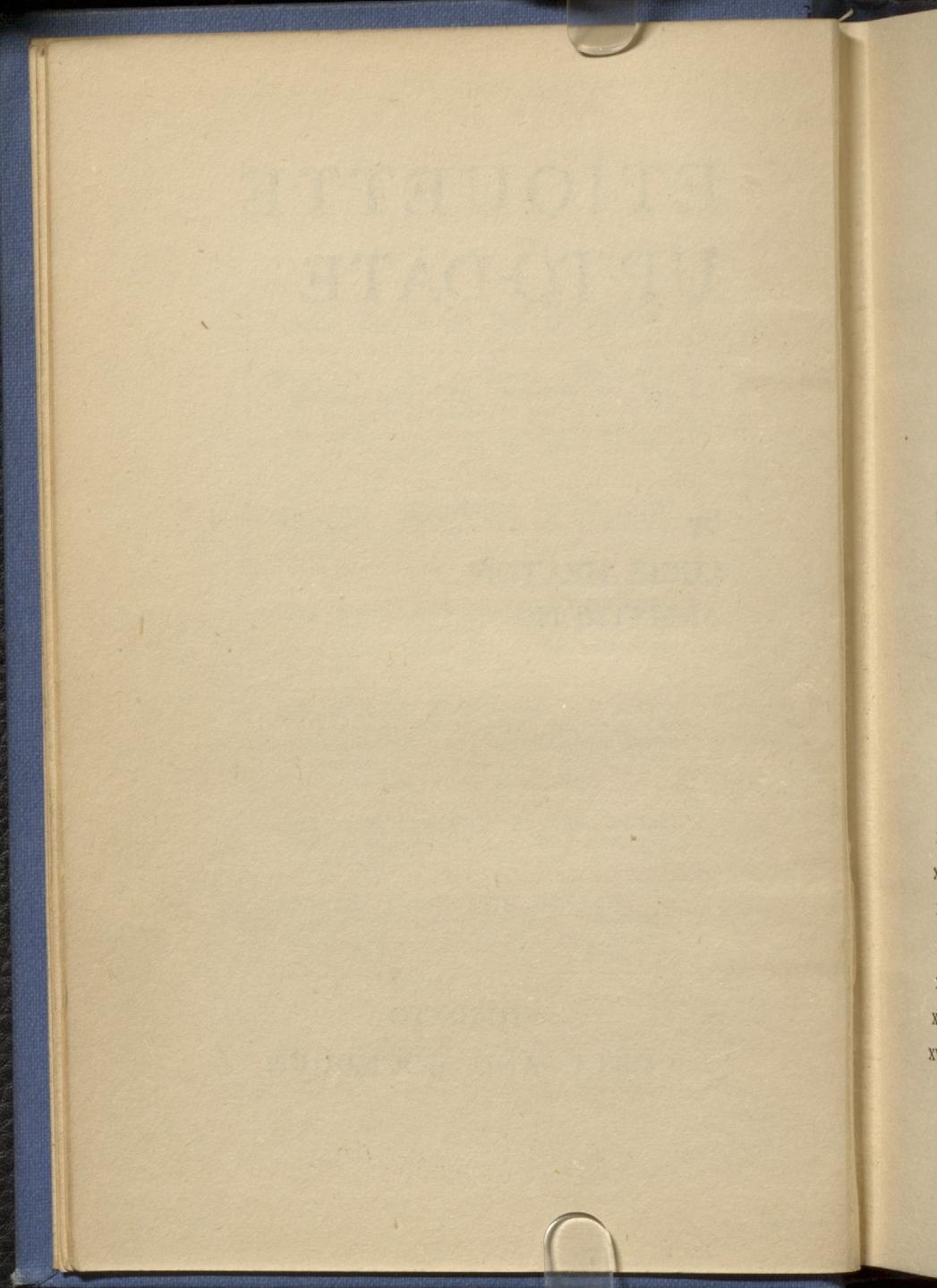
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ETIQUETTE UP-TO-DATE

By

LUCIE HEATON
ARMSTRONG

TORONTO
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I

VISITING CARDS

THE PROPER SIZE.—Three-and-a-half inches by two-and-a-half is supposed to be the proper size for a lady's visiting card, and three inches by one-and-a-half for a gentleman's. There have been some slight variations in size, however, in ladies' cards of late, and their tendency is to become smaller and smaller. Small cards are more convenient to carry, but the old-fashioned size looks the best style.

THE ORIGIN OF VISITING CARDS.—Some people assert that the first visiting cards originated from playing cards, in

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the days when ladies used to stake enormous sums on "Faro" and "Pope Joan." At the end of an exciting evening some of the players would clamour for another meeting, at which they could have their revenge, and one of the ladies would scrawl her name and address on one of the cards they had been playing with, adding the day and hour for the renewal of hostilities. Cards would seem to be returning to their original uses, for after years of genteel seclusion they find themselves written over in all kinds of ways, and unceremoniously sent by post. The modern lady treats her cards with very little ceremony, and contrives to cram a great deal of information into a small space. Her days are often written at the top in her own hand-writing, or she will put a line under the printed day to attract the attention of her friends. She

VISITING CARDS

will scribble "2nd and last Mondays" at the top, with "January to Easter" underneath, and Music, 4 - 6.30" under that again. If she is going to give some very informal evenings she will write "Thursdays, 8-11, till 30th January, inclusive," at the top of her card, with "Afternoon dress" underneath. If she is very pressed for space she may even write one corner upside down, but this is adding a burden to life for which we cannot quite forgive the smart lady. The card, having been written over, is properly despatched by post, generally in an envelope of special size which exactly fits it.

A BRIDE'S CARD.—A modern bride makes haste to dispense with any allusion to her maiden name, just as she no longer wears her wedding gown for evenings until it has had every scrap

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of orange blossoms removed. She no longer has her maiden name printed in one corner of her first invitation cards, transfixated with a neat little arrow, neither does she have her card edged with silver, so that it looks only fit to be placed inside a box of wedding cake. You receive a plain visiting card which informs you that Mrs Jack Newcome is "At Home" on 1st Mondays, and if you have not got a very good memory it is possible that you may spend some little time in trying to remember who Mrs Jack Newcome may be. It is rather a relief when the knowledge dawns on you, and you recognise your girlish friend under her novel name. "It is little Letty Lavender," you exclaim, and you post off to pay your first call on the friend who has newly joined the ranks of entertainers.

VISITING CARDS

P.P.C. CARDS.—Our mothers would have thought it a dreadful thing to have sent a P.P.C. card by post, but waste of time is the modern abhorrence, and driving round to leave cards of leave-taking cannot well be classed under any other head. Sent they must be, or a number of tiresome things are likely to occur. Our friends may send us invitations to dinners or theatres, and may be sorely put out at our failure to reply, or they may take a good deal of trouble to visit us on our "day," when we are very far from being "at home." We don't want our acquaintances to be like the young man in *Morocco Bound*, who, whenever he paid a call, always found "Welcome" on the doorstep, and heard that the family had gone away yachting. We must not make long absences from town at unusual times of year without

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letting people know, but we can acquaint them with our movements by sending our valedictory message through the post, and I cannot see that there is any lack of civility in this plan. There are other occasions, however, on which cards cannot be sent by post, and it may be as well to enumerate them.

WHEN CARDS CANNOT BE SENT BY Post.—Cards cannot be sent by post after an entertainment, or in return for wedding cards, or to enquire after a sick or bereaved friend. Good feeling informs us that cards of enquiry must either be left in person or sent by a servant, so that an answer may be obtained without entailing trouble on the sufferer or her friends. Cards cannot be posted after an entertainment; if our hostess takes the trouble to invite us we must certainly take the trouble to call. A call cannot

VISITING CARDS

be returned by posting a card, and if circumstances make it impossible to call, this is better explained verbally, or by a note. Distance, illness, or professional life may make calling a matter of impossibility, but the substitute for the visit must be an explanation or apology, not an attempt to do one's visiting by post. The postman's bag is not an actual Wishing Carpet, it can carry our thoughts, but not ourselves.

EXCHANGING CARDS. — Formalities should never be omitted in the case of a new acquaintance. Unceremonious ways are only permissible between friends. One should carefully observe all the little niceties of visiting and card-leaving with new people, just as one only admits them gradually into the inner circle of one's life. With regard to the exchange of cards between two

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people newly introduced, it is the superior in rank who proposes it. She offers her card, and the exchange is effected. If the second lady does not happen to have a card with her, she can leave one when she calls, or even say "I will post it to you," but, if she pursues the latter course, she must be careful to send it the same evening, as any delay might look as though she hesitated about accepting the acquaintance.

TURNING DOWN THE CORNER.—This has two meanings. The first, and most obvious one, is that the caller has left the card in person, as no one would venture to bend any one else's card. Secondly, it implies that all the ladies in the house are included in the visit. If a lady has four daughters, one would not leave five cards. One would leave

VISITING CARDS

two, one for her and one for the daughters, or only one card, turned down at the corner, so as to imply that all the feminine part of the household was included in the visit. A gentleman never turns down the corner of his card.

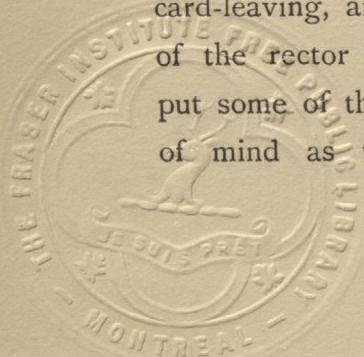


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II

PAYING CALLS

EVERYDAY ETIQUETTE.—One of my correspondents once asked me if I would leave off writing about parties for a while, and give a few hints on everyday etiquette instead. I felt that there was some justice in this request, for it is not given to all the world to entertain, but it happens to every one to have to pay calls now and then. More than half the letters I receive on the subject of etiquette are concerned with calls and card-leaving, and even the friendly visit of the rector or the curate appears to put some of the recipients into an agony of mind as to what has to be done



PAYING CALLS

next. When a bachelor rector comes to a new neighbourhood, I have quite a shoal of letters bearing the same post-mark, and all coming from ladies in a state of embarrassment as to whether it is their painful duty to call at a vicarage where no lady awaits to receive them. These questions belong chiefly to country places, but doubts as to who should pay the first call come from every part of the world, and the length of time before its return seems to be an insoluble problem with many. And even when both these difficulties have been triumphantly solved, one receives a third query, "Now, what shall I do next?" The reception of these letters makes me think that it may be as well to lay down a few rules for general guidance on the subject of calls, when to make them and when to return them.

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THE FIRST CALL.—The most useful rule to remember with regard to the first call is this—that it is the part of the superior to make the first advance. The titled lady calls first on the commoner (or asks her to call on her as the case may be), the married lady calls on the single one, the rich and important woman makes the first advance to her poorer sisters. I am always receiving letters in which the writers show that they are anxious to transgress this rule, and they will often advance many plausible reasons for their desire to take the initiative in making acquaintance with some wealthy or important neighbour. I always entreat them to adhere to the rule above given, as it is one of the greatest safeguards of Society. It preserves the superior from being encroached upon, and prevents the inferior from

PAYING CALLS

making an unwelcome advance, so it is equally precious to both parties, if one could only get people to believe it.

TOWN AND COUNTRY.—My reader may think that the custom of the resident calling on the new-comer in the country is a contradiction of the rule just given, but it is not so in reality, as her residence in the place gives her a certain superiority of position, and she may be able to be useful. It has always been the custom in country places for the older residents to call on the new ones; but in town the contrary fashion obtains. The latest arrival in town must call on his friends and acquaintances at once, otherwise no one would know he was in town, and he would not receive any invitations. When people return to the country after an absence they usually

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follow the same plan, and pay a round of visits on their friends to show that they have returned; but there is no precise rule as to this, and it often happens that intimate friends call on the agreeable neighbour the moment they hear she has come back, so as to show their pleasure in her return.

WHEN TO RETURN A CALL.—All formalities are for the commencement of acquaintanceship, and they gradually cease between friends. A first call, for example, should be returned within a week; but life would be unbearable if all visiting had to be carried on at such a rate. The call is returned with such speed so as to show a proper appreciation of the desire to make acquaintance; but there is no necessity for such frequent meetings when relations have once been formed. Calls are more welcome on “At

PAYING CALLS

Home" days, and a visit might be deferred for a day or two if the "day" were sufficiently near at hand. It is good of a busy woman of fashion to devote a special time to the reception of her friends, and it seems selfish to intrude further upon her leisure. But a call is not wasted even if one has the misfortune to miss the hostess. It is a polite attention to the mistress of the house, and forms the basis of future invitations.

THE SECOND CALL.—The rule about the return of a first call is an important one, but there is no exact rule about the second call. The usual course is for the more important person to send some invitation to the new acquaintance, and this gives the latter the chance of paying a duty - call soon afterwards, if it has been a dinner invitation, or of leaving cards if it has been any other entertain-

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ment. The inferior in rank can send an invitation to the superior once calls have been exchanged, and the latter would leave cards afterwards. Supposing that no invitations happen to be given on either side, the acquaintance would be continued by means of calls, and many people's "At Home" days are so agreeable in themselves that they do away with the necessity for more formal invitations. If nothing has happened to disturb the ordinary course of events, a month or six weeks may be allowed to elapse before the second call is made, supposing that both persons are residents in London; in the country a second call is often made within a fortnight.

III

CALLS AND CALLING

ABOUT CALLS.—The subject of calls and card-leaving comes up again and again in volumes of etiquette, or in the correspondence column of ladies' papers. Some one in a daily paper lately complained that a well-known ladies' journal treated this particular subject every week. I think this was overstating the case, but even if it were so, articles on calls and calling are the one thing needful, if one may judge by the letters asking for advice which are constantly coming to the writer on etiquette. “When should I call?” “When should

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I return a call?" and "Who should call first?" are the questions most frequently asked. Circumstances alter cases, and the case is sometimes so imperfectly stated that advice becomes additionally difficult. A few general rules may, however, be something to go by, and I will proceed to dilate on them, in case they may be useful to any of my readers.

THE VISITS OF ROYALTY.—Ordinary folks might learn a lesson from the quickness with which the visits of royalties are returned. When we read in the papers that the Kaiser called on a Danish Prince (in a Danish uniform) in the morning, when the latter went to Berlin, and that the Prince (in a German uniform) called on the Kaiser in the afternoon, we feel almost inclined to laugh—it seems such a hurried affair,

CALLS AND CALLING

and such a mingling of personalities and raiment. But the principle is entirely correct, and when we read some of the private diaries of the Court ladies, we find that the royalties are impelled by the kindest feelings to show the greatest courtesy to one another. Sometimes there is quite a little rivalry as to who should call first; and they take the greatest trouble to return a call at once, even when circumstances are most unpropitious, as the lady-in-waiting of the Queen of Roumania relates in some of her articles. Some young Princesses called on them *incognito* on the day of their departure from the city, and the Court footmen were very anxious to keep them out, thinking that one was so pretty, she must be an actress! All complications being over, and the

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visitors well received and speeded on their way, one of the ladies-in-waiting raised a cry: "Ah, what a pity! such charming Princesses, and we shall never set eyes on them again!" "But you shall!" cried Carmen Sylvia, "put on your things at once, and we will go to the station and see them off. The stationmaster will keep the train waiting a little for us!" So there was a scamper to the station, a surprise meeting, and many last words and good wishes before the young Princesses departed on their way.

TO RETURN A KINDNESS.—These royal examples show us that the proper object of strife is civility, and that we cannot be too impatient either to show or to return a kindness. "How can I pay her most attention?" and "How soon can I return her call?" are more

CALLS AND CALLING

proper questions than "Need I call?" or "How long can I be before I return the visit?" We cannot be sufficiently gracious to our equals, but we must not be pushing with our superiors. If chance throws us in the way of people who are our superiors in station, we should wait for them to make the advance. Either they should call on us first, or they should invite us to call on them—it does not matter which.

WHEN ETIQUETTE MATTERS.—Etiquette is only important at the commencement of acquaintance, as my late cousin, Frances Power Cobbe, once remarked to me, when she had a little conversation with me on the subject. You could not be sufficiently careful, she thought, at starting; all the preliminaries ought to be carefully observed,

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over-familiarity or carelessness would be equally ruinous to begin with. But friendship, once formed, has no need of little rules and regulations—a perfect understanding sets all these little ceremonies at naught.

IN DIFFERENT PLACES.—Calling is guided by different rules in different places. In the country the resident calls first. In town the country cousin must take the initiative, or the Londoner will not know he has arrived. The suburbs often have rules of their own, and it is as well to find out what custom obtains. As a general rule, the residents behave as though they lived in the country, and pay the first call on the strangers, but sometimes the strangers have come to the suburb in hope of quiet, and do not wish for callers without introductions.

CALLS AND CALLING

Residents in the suburbs are often full of petty pride, and rejoice in making an acquaintance one day in order that they may cut her the next. The new comer in such a place is often wise to depend on her own circle—the friends she has formed already, in various parts of town, guided by mutual interests and resemblance of opinions and tastes rather than by the accident of propinquity.

NECESSARY CALLS.—There is less ceremony about calling than there used to be, but certain calls are obligatory. We must all go and see the bride in her new house, or she will not forgive us; we must call after a dinner-party or ball, and also upon friends who live within a reasonable distance when they have sent us “change of address” cards. We are

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not obliged to make a visitation. The smart woman does not stop long anywhere. Unless there is a crowd and she is amused, she rather prides herself on seeing how many calls she can make in the course of the afternoon. Times are changed since Fanny Burney's day; a visit seems to have been a portentous business then. The modern young man pays many trips to the Continent without troubling to inform his friends about his travels, and the modern young lady will not have to record in her diary, as did the authoress of "Evelina":

"Mr Dash called and sat with us two hours, being anxious to *compare notes* about his travels with my father." Two hours seems then to have been the ordinary time for a call. We hear also of a certain Colonel who "called at breakfast-time, and stayed two

CALLS AND CALLING

hours, then made his compliments and departed." What should we do now-days with a visitor who arrived thus early, and robbed us of two good hours of our working-day? He would not, I imagine, have the chance of "making his compliments" a second time.

IV

MORE ABOUT CALLING

BACHELOR CALLS.—Bachelor calls are chiefly acknowledged by invitations. The names are added to the invitation lists, and their owners are asked to luncheon - parties, dinner - parties, or to crushes—anything that happens to turn up. Ladies do not leave cards on bachelors, except sometimes after an entertainment, and even this is not obligatory. A woman with a carriage may possibly drop cards at a bachelor's house after she has been to a party there the day before, but most people would be content with leaving a card

MORE ABOUT CALLING

on the way out, or perhaps writing a line of congratulation afterwards, if it has been a function which has given the host much trouble, such as a regatta-party, for example. If there are men in the family, they return the first call of a bachelor, if their occupations allow of it.

DUTY CALLS.—Calls after entertainments are known by the serious title above given, so we must not allow the chance visitor to interrupt us when we are setting off to pay one of these necessary visits. A call is the just due of the person who has entertained us; she has had all the trouble, and it is only fair that she should receive our congratulations after the event. A duty call is in one way the pleasantest of visits, for we have a subject of conversation ready to hand—

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how nicely it all went off, how well every one looked, or (even more welcome) how peculiar was the appearance of the smartest woman present! Does she make up, and is her hair really her own? Such speculations appear to enliven the call after the party, and make the time pass equally pleasantly to hostess and guest. The call after a dinner-party is imperative; it should be paid within a week, and one should always ask if the hostess is at home before leaving cards. It is better to pay this call on the "At Home" day, if the day occurs sufficiently soon after the party. Calls after other entertainments should also be paid within the week, if possible, or cards left within a few days; the call on the next "At Home" day is, however, the most welcome of visits, and it is a greater compliment

MORE ABOUT CALLING

to pay a call when one is certain that the hostess will be visible. People do not always call after weddings, as they often occur in the houses of people with whom they are unacquainted. It is more usual to leave a card on the way out, unless one is already intimate with the hostess. Nobody calls after a garden-party. This is the one entertainment which forms the exception to the rule. The guests often drive a long way to a function of this description, and it would be most inconsiderate to expect them to drive the same distance again within a week, for no other purpose than to pay a call. Guests at a garden-party often leave their cards as they go out, if they happen to be strangers in the neighbourhood; but in any case they are not supposed to call.

FAREWELL CALLS. — There are not

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many occasions in life when farewell calls need be paid. That difficult word "good-bye" (made dramatic by Tosti, but easily made vulgar or awkward by the person who stands at the carriage window waiting for the whistle of the guard) — that difficult word does not often need to be said with seriousness in social life, where comings and goings are so frequent. People go off for long voyages to distant parts of the earth, and come back to find they have never been missed, and the long journeys which are taken during the autumn are simply looked upon as the natural exodus during the "dead season." Farewell visits are made if the absence is to extend beyond three months, more especially if it occurs at an unexpected time of year. They should also be paid after a visit to some country place

MORE ABOUT CALLING

where the residents have shown one much civility. The person who is returning to town would express a desire to continue the acquaintance while paying a call of this character, saying that she hoped her new friends would be sure to look her up when they next came to town. It is not necessary for a bride to pay a round of farewell visits before her wedding; every one knows that she is greatly occupied, and would not dream of expecting it, unless she was going away to another country for an indefinite period.

PAROCHIAL CALLS.—A parochial call shows a kind desire on the part of a vicar to become acquainted with his flock, but it has no particular signification from a Society point of view. I have often been asked whether it is the

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duty of a newly-appointed vicar to call first on his parishioners or the reverse, and I believe that both courses are common. Strictly speaking, the first call should come from the vicar, but it is quite open to the parishioners to call first at the vicarage if they prefer it. I am speaking of a married vicar, of course. When a clergyman is unmarried, the call is returned by one of the gentlemen of the family, who leaves his own card and that of the mistress of the house. The same course would be pursued with regard to an unmarried doctor or lawyer, and invitations to dinner, lunch, or tea would be the method of pursuing the acquaintance.

WHEN TO RETURN THEM.—The first call of a vicar or vicar's wife should be returned within a week (on the next "At Home" day, if possible), according to the

MORE ABOUT CALLING

ordinary rules of calling. People should not take offence if they do not receive another call from the vicarage very speedily, for they should remember that the vicar and his wife have to call on the whole parish, while the recipients of these calls have a far smaller visiting-list. True kindness would suggest that they should not take offence if they do not meet with as much attention from the vicarage as they would like; if they have matters to talk over with the clergyman and his wife, they should not be above paying another call within a short time. People are often very hard on vicar's wives in the matter of calling, and I have known several who have absolutely broken down in health through struggling to keep up with the demands of a specially exacting flock. While knowing the rules of card-leaving,

ETIQUETTE-UP-TO-DATE

and practising them as far as possible, we should be ready to make excuses for busy professional people if time does not allow them to call as often or as soon as they should.

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V

"AT HOMES" IN THE SEASON

IN THE SEASON.—There is a wide distinction between an "At Home" in the Season and out of it. Winter tea-parties are friendly affairs, at which little entertainment is expected, but the best professionals are heard during "At Homes" in the Season, and there is much more preparation for the guests. The hostess invites all the important people she knows, and receives them with a certain amount of ceremony. She is no longer to be found seated comfortably in her drawing-room chatting over the tea-cups, and pouring out tea, but standing on

ETIQUETTE-UP-TO-DATE

duty at the head of the staircase, in a toilette worthy of the occasion. It takes three or four men-servants to get the visitor as far as the top of the stairs; but though there are so many, they don't get in one another's way, as each has his appointed office. The tea is placed in the dining-room, with more servants behind the buffet, and the refreshments are of an elaborate character, including ices and choice fruit.

INVITATIONS.—Although the party is of a somewhat ceremonious character, the invitations are often lacking in stateliness. As the party is given on the usual "At Home" day the hostess's visiting-card is sufficient for all purposes, and if she is a very grand lady indeed she dispenses with the R.S.V.P.—you cannot well put these letters on a visiting card — on the assumption that

"AT HOMES" IN THE SEASON

the resources of her establishment are sufficient for any number of guests. She writes the date and the month at the top of the card (as "Wednesday" or "Thursday" is already printed in one corner) and scribbles "music" at the right hand lower corner. No answer is required to an invitation of this kind, though people would write a line of regret afterwards if they were prevented from being present. It is because the party is given on the "At Home" day that this style of invitation is permissible, otherwise a large square "At Home" card would be used with as much printing as possible, even to the name of the principal artist, if he is sufficiently celebrated to justify it. Dainty little envelopes are sold specially for the sending of visiting cards, so tiny that I often wonder they do not get lost in the post.

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THE TOILETTE.—The hostess wears a smart toilette on an occasion of this kind, and the present fashions help to give it a particularly dressy appearance. The neck may be cut down in a small V, and elbow-sleeves may be worn either with gloves or without. A young hostess often wears white, and an older one white veiled with black, and relieved with pale blue; by her side stands one of her little girls dressed in white, holding a posy of pink roses to present to the singers. Each artist is to be given a bouquet, and the little girl makes a pretty picture as she stands holding the flowers. If she is quite little, she will wear a low-necked frock, cut in a nice V, with a necklace of uncut turquoise, or a string of pearls, and the lace on her shoulders will be fastened with a gold safety - pin set with turquoise.

"AT HOMES" IN THE SEASON

Elbow-sleeves and long white gloves will be worn, and white shoes and stockings. Though the little lady is so smartly attired, she is not supposed to be conscious of it, but will try to help her mother to look after the guests as soon as she is relieved from her post.

THE MUSIC.—Beautiful toilettes are worn by the guests, for nothing is too dressy for the Season. Ladies do not stay very long at a party of this kind, as a rule, as they are anxious to show their finery in as many different places as possible during the course of the afternoon. They flit in and out like brilliant birds of passage; the crowd is coming and going all the time. As soon as the visitors have greeted the hostess, the little daughter gives them a programme, on which are the names of the songs, and the names of the artists. The

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guests make their way into the drawing-room, and listen for a while to the music. Rival hostesses study the performance with a good deal of attention, as they are always on the look-out for attractions for their own parties. The singers are often presented to any one who is likely to be useful to them, as this is a mutual benefit. The singing generally takes place in the back drawing-room, and the furniture of both rooms is cleared away as much as possible so as to allow of no impediment to locomotion. Seats are placed all round the room, or across it, according to taste. Flowers are a feature at these gatherings, not so formally disposed as at a ball, but a few choice blooms placed about here and there. Garlands on the walls and fireplace and mantelpieces covered with roses are only suitable for

"AT HOMES" IN THE SEASON

dances. Flowers at afternoon parties look better if they are arranged in a more natural style.

THE BUFFET.—Roses are always very much used for the decoration of the buffet during the Season, placed in large silver bowls or glass vases. Scarlet gladioli are also very much liked, as they go so well with strawberries. Festoons of smilax and banksia roses are sometimes twined round the dishes, or festooned up the sides of the tablecloth. The maid-servants stand behind the table, and pour out tea and coffee, and hand the cups across the table to the visitors. Ices and fruit and sandwiches and cake are also given, as well as various kinds of cup and lemonade. Men-servants are in attendance to look after the wine departments, indeed sometimes all the waiting is done by them.

VI

LADIES' LUNCHEON PARTIES

AN AMERICAN FASHION.—Luncheon has always been considered rather in the light of a feminine meal, but it is only within the last few years that the harmless necessary man has been done away with altogether. His presence used not to be as indispensable at lunch as it was at dinner, but if he "dropped in" to the midday meal, he was always a welcome guest. The idea of luncheon-parties given exclusively for ladies would have been considered just a little dowdy in old times, but now it is decidedly smart. Like many of our

LADIES' LUNCHEON PARTIES

new fashions it dates from America, and there is a good deal to be said on the side of this social departure.

THE REASON WHY.—Ladies are as a general rule so much more at leisure than men in the middle of the day that there is less fear of the hostess having a number of refusals. She can plan her party beforehand with a reasonable possibility of its being able to realise her expectations. And if she gets the right set of people together, the affair has more chance of being successful than if she had one or two men "thrown in." When the sexes are equally balanced at a gathering of this nature, the chances are all in favour of an agreeable gathering; but I don't think that just a few men improve a party of ladies—it is neither one thing nor the other. A ladies' luncheon-party contains

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all the elements of a pleasant social function, as long as the women are all very bright in themselves, or united by some common interest.

AN OBJECT.—I don't think a ladies' lunch is likely to be particularly successful if it is given without a purpose, such as to bring a certain number of people together who are anxious to meet, or who have something to talk over, or something of special interest in common. For example, the cards might bear some such inscription as the following: "To meet Mrs Blank on her return from South Africa," or "To say good-bye to Miss Asterisk before her departure for America"; great personal friends of the ladies being invited, and also people who are interested in the special mission (whatever it may be) which is the cause of the journey. A

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ladies' lunch might be given to some popular novelist who had just brought out a new book, or to members of some political league just before a Bill connected with their special subject was coming on in the House. A lunch might be given when a bazaar was going to be arranged in some country place, so that matters could be talked over beforehand, or a coming bride might give a luncheon-party to her bridesmaids before her wedding, so that they could talk over their dresses, or afterwards, so that she could show them her new house. Meetings of old school-fellows might also be arranged, and they would enjoy a talk over old times. There should be some *raison d'être* for a ladies' lunch, and the party wants to be carefully thought out; it should not be the mere putting together of a few

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people to whom one owes "returns," and who would merely think it was a dull party because there were no men.

INVITATION.—The invitation may be sent out on "At Home" cards, or in the form of a friendly note. Two o'clock is the usual hour for lunch, and a week's notice is generally considered sufficient. Introductions are effected as the guests arrive. General conversation is always expected at lunch, so the sooner the guests are made acquainted with one another the better.

DRESS FOR A LUNCHEON-PARTY.—Ladies do not remove their hats at lunch, but if they have a heavy wrap they give it to the servant on arrival, saying, "I will leave my cloak." The servant hangs the cloak in the hall, or lays it in an ante-room or library, if there is one on the same floor. Guests

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are shown into the drawing-room after they arrive, and announced in the usual fashion. The hostess wears a smart indoor dress; it would not be correct for her to wear a hat if the party takes place in her own house. If it is given in a ladies' club or a restaurant she would naturally wear her hat.

AT LUNCH.—Lunch should be announced about ten minutes after the arrival of the guests, the hostess generally inviting the most distinguished lady present to lead the way. The ladies generally go in to lunch two and two at parties of this kind (not taking arms, but side by side), the hostess bringing up the rear. The hostess sits at the head of the table, and the most distinguished ladies on either side. It is as well to have name-cards in the plates, as it saves some trouble in arranging the

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guests. The hostess should remember where every one is to sit, so that she can help them to find their places if they are in doubt, for I must own that if there is any point in this festivity when one misses the friendly man, it is when one is looking for one's name-card. With regard to the luncheon, it must depend on the style of the house. A very elaborate repast would not be expected in a small establishment, and a hostess who had not many servants would be wise to include a few cold dishes in the *menu*, or, at any rate, some which only required to be warmed up, having been prepared the day before. The meal may be commenced with soup, though this is not a necessity at lunch. Lobster or salmon mayonnaise is more easily arranged than boiled or fried fish, a raised pie might form one

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of the dishes, and the *entrée* might also be cold. Chicken, either hot or cold, is always liked, or fillet of beef is an easy dish to serve, and it can be made to look pretty by means of a border of red and green vegetables set at intervals round the dish. The sweets are rather a feature at a ladies' lunch. There should be a nice choice, such as fruit tart and cream, jellies, creams, etc. Cheese should be daintily served, with plenty of choice in the way of toast and biscuits. Dessert is not necessary at lunch, but it is often given under the title of "a little fruit." Coffee is generally served at the table, and tea in the drawing-room a little later on. Claret and sauterne are generally offered during lunch, the servant saying "white or red" as she goes round the table with the two bottles.

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DECORATIONS.—Simple decorations always look best for lunch, such as daffodils, marguerites, or violets. A few violets thrown into the finger-bowls makes the water smell of the flowers, or a little violet scent can be poured into each finger-bowl instead. Some hostesses place a buttonhole in each table napkin, and a large basket of flowers before the lady who is the guest of the occasion. Many little attentions can be thought of by way of giving a pleasant surprise to the guests. A pretty quotation might be written on the name-cards, and I once went to a party of this kind where the hostess had written a little verse of poetry for each of the cards, making each fit in with the character and aspirations of the guest.

VII

CHILDREN'S PARTIES

FOR CHILDREN.—Giving a children's party entails a good deal of hard work, but the hostess can always feel sure that her efforts are appreciated. Grown-up guests may be bored or ungrateful, but to little children a party is a huge enjoyment at the time, and remembered long afterwards.

THE INVITATIONS.—A little imagination is allowable in the invitations, and pictorial ones are always appreciated. It is usual to send out the invitations in the name of the children of the house, and prefixes are sometimes dis-

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carded. "Gladys and Dorothy" will be at home from 4 to 9 or "Will you come" may be substituted for the more formal wording. The newest idea is to have photographs of the little hosts and hostesses at the top of the invitation card, and if they are pretty children the result is very good.

THE ANSWERS.—Children should be allowed to write their own answers to the invitations, being coaxed to the task by the promise of pretty notepaper to write upon. The answers should be written in the same style as the invitations, Miss or Master being used if the invitation is a formal one, or "Tom and Gladys" if the card has been issued by "Dorothy Smith" or "the little Smiths."

FANCY DRESS.—Grown-up people do not usually wear evening or fancy dress

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for a children's party, as the figging up is done by the little folks. The toilette of the older people depends chiefly on the time of their arrival or departure; in a party which takes place from 4 to 9, for example, the early comers would naturally wear hats and day gowns, while those who came later would be in demi-toilette or evening dress. If it is known that the evening is to conclude with a supper and dance for the grown-ups those who meant to stay would naturally come in evening dress.

A SUCCESSFUL PARTY.—Variety is the soul of a juvenile party, and no game or entertainment should be carried on too long. A little while since I went to a children's party which was quite a model of what such a thing should be. There were some two hundred little children, most of them in fancy dress,

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and instead of behaving like the children in Dickens' Christmas Party, where "every child behaved as if it were forty children," all these little things behaved like one good child. They were absolutely good and happy, because they were being amused all the time, and the way in which their hostess made them obedient to the word of command showed me that she would be equally in place if she were commanding a regiment, or leading a party in the House. Sometimes they were marching round to music, sometimes they were sitting down to see a conjurer, sometimes all seated in a circle on the ground to see two children doing a fancy dance in the centre. Whatever she suggested to them was instantly done, and always enjoyed.

CHILD PERFORMERS.—Nearly all the performers were children, some of them

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professional and some not. A lady conducted a children's choir. A gentleman sang a song about Playtime, with a catching refrain, which he taught the children to sing. A lady conjurer gave a very graceful entertainment and many encores were given for "Chapeaugraphy." A little girl pleased with an Irish jig, and the Swedish National Dances of two other girls were most curious and interesting.

THE DRESSES.—Some of the fancy dresses were very pretty, but I have not space for much description. There were Indians and Japs, Jack Tars, and Chinese Mandarins, a Beefeater of five, and a dear little Princess Elizabeth of three, also a small David Garrick, who looked the part to the life. The dresses were seen to good advantage during the procession to the mysterious platform, where Father

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Christmas, excellently impersonated by a gentleman, distributed fairy gifts. A little girl dressed as "The Spirit of Playtime," held a banner on one side of the platform.

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VIII

WEDDINGS

MANY CHANGES.—I often think our grandmothers would be much astonished if they could witness a modern wedding. There is no other function which has changed so much from what it was in old times. Dinners are different, and dances are gayer, and the afternoon tea-party was absolutely non-existent, but the modern wedding is a complete revolution, and very little of the old etiquette survives. Nobody cries at a modern wedding, neither the bride nor her mother are bathed in tears. (In the case of the late Lord Lytton things

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went further still, and it is on record that both the bride and bridegroom went up to the altar with their eyes swimming in tears.) There is no weeping at a modern wedding, the bride's mother looks cheerful and happy; and the guests murmur to one another what a lucky woman she is to have got her daughter off so nicely. The bridegroom is also more cheerful; he no longer mopes in a mysterious way in the chancel till the arrival of his bride, but recognises his intimate friends and relations if they happen to be at the top of the church. But the greatest change of all is in the reception after the ceremony.

LICENSED TO BORE

A "licence to bore" was the privilege of the old wedding guest, and the older he was, the more tiresome he was

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allowed to be. He could get up and make the most lengthy and awkward speech, on the ground that he was proposing somebody's health, and he often alluded to all the subjects which it would have been wiser to avoid before he sat down. If he reduced the bride's mother to tears he was satisfied with the result of his eloquence. Every member of the party had his or her proper place at the banquet, and it was only possible to invite as many people as could be comfortably seated at table. All the smart people, all the young people, and all the mixed elements that go towards the making of a gay party, were left out, of necessity. The bores remained, and, what was worse, they were allowed peculiar facilities for the exercise of their powers.

THE MODERN WEDDING.—The modern

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wedding is a decided improvement on the earlier function. "The more the merrier" is its motto, the house is crammed to overflowing, and people do exactly what they like. They must shake hands with the hostess as soon as they come in—they will find her standing ready at the door of the reception-room, and they must then make their way to the happy pair and offer their congratulations. But these two duties performed, they are perfectly free, and can talk to their friends or inspect the wedding presents, or get some refreshments. Speeches are out of fashion; it is the rarest thing in the world if some old friend of the family proposes the health of the bride. It is not always possible now for the happy pair to lead the way into the refreshment room, for they spend so

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much time in receiving the guests who are anxious (as the Americans say) to shake them by the hand. It often happens that the guests arrive in the tea-room before the bride goes in—an action which would have been considered a frightful solecism in old days.

REFRESHMENTS. — Refreshments are served at a long buffet, with the servants standing behind it to pass the things across, and occasionally a few small tables are placed about the room in case any one prefers to sit down. If the room is a very large one, a bridal table is sometimes placed at one end or in the centre, and in this case the bride tries to break away from her friends, when the meal is announced, so as to lead the way in, in proper style. The order of her going is as follows: Bride and

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bridegroom (the bride taking the bridegroom's left arm), her father with the bridegroom's mother, his father with the mother of the bride, the best man with the chief bridesmaid. The rest of the bridesmaids with the gentlemen who have acted as ushers. Name-cards would probably be used at the wedding-table, and the arrangement of the party would be as follows: the bride would sit on the bridegroom's left hand, and opposite her wedding cake. Her father would sit on her other side, with the bridegroom's mother, and her mother would sit next the bridegroom, next to his father. The bridesmaids and ushers would fill up the rest of the table, each bridesmaid sitting at the right hand of the gentlemen who had escorted her. It is not always possible for all the bridesmaids to be seated at table, but

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the best man and chief bridesmaid should be there.

AT THE CHURCH.—Not all the guests who appear at a reception are to be seen at the church; engagements do not always allow of it. They come on from other places, and they frequently leave before the bride, another piece of old-fashioned etiquette which has completely gone by the board. Personally, I think it is more polite to go to the church if possible, and it was a kindly custom to stay till the end of the reception till the young couple start off for their honeymoon, but modern life is so busy and so full, that it is not always possible for the guests to observe these little courtesies. It used to be considered dreadfully rude to arrive at the church after the bride, and it certainly makes the service very

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uncomfortable. Punctuality is the truest politeness in this case, and at the ideal wedding every one should be nicely settled in their places before the arrival of the bride. But this is not often practised at fashionable weddings, and the guests often arrived in one steady stream from twelve to two, some turning up at the church, and others at the house.

THOSE WHO HELP.—Now that a wedding is such an enormous function, ushers are greatly required. Smart young men are pressed into the service, and are only too pleased to make themselves useful in every way, so as to make the wedding go off well. They help to find places for the guests in the church, and to call up the carriages, and so on. Sometimes they ask the guests whether they are the bride's friends or the

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bridegroom's, when they first arrive at the church, so that they may be placed on the correct side of the aisle. It is a useful thing for the wedding guest to remember that the bride's friends and relations are always seated at the left side of the church (as one goes up from the porch), and the bridegroom's on the right. It is so much more agreeable to be amongst one's own set from the first, and one often meets friends with whom to go on to the house.

FAVOURS. — Favours are still given at large weddings, and the newest idea is to give them to the guests as they go in. Four young ladies (friends of the bride) are stationed in the porch with great baskets of favours, and packets of large pins, which they offer to each guest on arrival. The bride gives them each a fine spray of malmaisons or roses

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to wear, and also a beautiful gold pin with which to fasten them on. This is a good thing to do when the bride has more girl friends than she can invite to be bridesmaids, as it gives these others some part in the affair, and is also an excuse for giving them a little present. A man from the florist's is generally in attendance to hold the heavy basket, and to "feed" them with favours, so that they can be given without delay.

IX

MORE ABOUT WEDDINGS

BEFORE THE DAY.—A notable feature about the modern wedding is the amount of festivity which occurs before the day. "All the world" is invited to the wedding, but some of the choicest functions take place at the residence of the bride's parents beforehand. Imposing as was the wedding ceremony of the daughter of Lady Warwick, every one who was numbered among the house-guests will tell you that it was as nothing to the party which took place the night before. The Castle looked so beautiful when it was lighted up, and the ladies looked

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their loveliest in evening dress. Some charming little parties preceded the marriage of Lady Aberdeen's daughter, the wedding breakfast took place in Park Lane, at the Countess of Tweedmouth's; but the select little dinner-party for bridesmaids and groomsmen, which was given at the charming old house in Grosvenor Street, is among the pleasantest memories of those who were privileged to take part in the wedding festivities.

FOR THE BRIDESMAIDS.—Little festivities for the bridesmaids commence some time before the wedding. No silver-edged cards are sent on these occasions, a hurried note from the bride is all that is required. "Dear Amy, can you come in on Thursday afternoon to talk about the bridesmaids' dresses?" will be the first of the series; "Will you come to

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tea to see some of the wedding presents," the next; and finally, "Mother says I may give a tiny dinner - party to my bridesmaids and groomsmen before the wedding. I want to have it on Wednesday at eight o'clock if that will suit you. Do come if you can!" These are a few of the preparatory functions, but there are many others besides. There are little parties to help arrange the wedding presents, and parties to talk over the bridal procession, luncheons and teas for important relations and parties at which other parties are planned. Life is one long series of festivities for the happy young bridesmaid selected either for her relationship or her looks.

Most IMPORTANT.—One of the most important (though least informal) parties is that which is given to the bridesmaids when the question of their dresses is

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under discussion. This is indeed a serious occasion, one on which Greek meets Greek (otherwise blonde disputes with brunette). Each lady advises the colour which she thinks will be most becoming to her complexion, and also presses the claims of her favourite dressmaker; the bride and her mother have also their own ideas, and confusion becomes more confounded the longer the party goes on. It is always well to remember that whenever there is any difference of opinion the bride carries the casting vote. Her wishes must always be complied with, as the whole affair is being arranged to do her honour.

WHAT TO CHOOSE.—Some people are so alarmed at the thought of the party last described that they prefer to do without consultation, and simply write to the bridesmaids telling them what dressmaker

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is chosen, and what style of dress besides. This seems rather an unceremonious way of behaving, but there are brides who share the opinions of the heroine in a recent novel by John Strange Winter. "My dear Ju," she said to her sister when the question was first mooted, "the bride ought to choose the bridesmaids' dresses. I have seen bridesmaids in Charles II. dresses, in Tudor dresses, in Directoire costumes, and such close copies of Boughton's Dutch maidens that one felt they only wanted sabots to be entirely correct. I have seen bridesmaids with their gathers under their arms, and with pouches down to their knees. I am going to have none of these monstrosities." These are sensible words, and it is right that the bride should have the casting vote, but as she has neither to wear the gown, nor (as in

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old times) to pay for it, I think it is only fair that the bridesmaids should be consulted before this important point is settled.

FLOWERS.—Flowers form a prominent feature of the modern wedding, and they are almost as much thought of at the parties which precede it as on the day itself. Some special sentiment is generally connected with the chosen blossom ; it must be the favourite flower of the bride, or better still her name-flower, or the one which is the badge of her clan. Name-flowers are many, and they are also pretty, there is Marguerite, Daisy, Violet, Lily, and Rose. Failing any other floral emblem one can always fall back on white heather or edelweiss for luck, or on agreeable combinations of heartsease or forget-me-nots, arranged in true lover's knots. A June wedding

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should be marked by roses ; malmaisons form a sensible choice, as they are pretty and fragrant, and lasting. It is also important that the flowers should tone in with the dress, so that there is a good deal to be thought about in such an apparently slight item as the flowers.

WHO IS TO PAY.—This is a question which constantly recurs in correspondence columns just before the wedding day, and I suppose there is no other which is so frequently asked. "What do the fees for the clergyman come to?" wrote a best-man to me once, with the pathetic query, "and must I bear this expense?" I hastened to assure him that although it was his undoubted duty to give the clergyman his fee in the vestry the burden did not fall upon him personally, as the bridegroom handed him the money beforehand. It

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must be forty years or more since it was the custom for the happy bridegroom to provide carriages for all the guests who were going to grace the occasion, yet the legend still lingers in some people's minds, and I am often consulted on this point. The bridegroom has not to provide any carriages, except the one in which he drives from the church to the house with his bride, and afterwards to the station. This is done when the bridegroom has a carriage of his own, but when people have to hire even the expense of this carriage is often borne by the bride's father. There is not more than one "bridal carriage" generally used at a wedding, and the bride goes to the church and returns from it in the same carriage, though in different company.

X

BEFORE THE WEDDING

BETROTHAL PARTIES.—Betrothal parties have always been given in Germany, and the *fête des fiançailles* is quite an important function in France. But it is only very recently that a similar idea has taken root in England, so recently that we have no correct word for it. We cannot wonder, however, that we have no correct word for the betrothal party, when we remember that we have no correct word for the betrothed. A girl cannot allude to the man she is engaged to in English, "my affianced," "my betrothed," would sound too

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stilted, and it is only Mary, the house-maid, who can speak of "my young man." The future husband can only be alluded to as the *fiancé*, and there is no English term to express the party given in honour of an engaged couple.

THE INVITATIONS.—Whether there is a name for it or not, the party is a very useful thing, as it serves to introduce the bridegroom to the set into which he is going to marry. It is particularly useful if the bridegroom is a stranger to most of his *fiancée's* friends, as he can be introduced to a number of them in the course of an afternoon. The party is given by any relation or old friend of the bride's, and she is invited to supply a list of names and addresses of friends whom she would like to invite. The invitations are sent out on large "At Home" cards with the hours 4 to 8, or

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3.30 to 6.30 in one corner; also "Music," if this is to be a feature. Under the date is written as follows: "To meet Miss Grace Smith and Mr John Brown, before their wedding in June." Sometimes the young lady writes a note to her friends, in addition, to tell them that the invitation is coming, or she may invite her in an informal way, as follows:—

"DEAR MISS DASH.—My cousins, the Jones's, are giving an "At Home" at their house, 40 Hill Street, for friends to meet Mr John Blank and myself previous to our marriage in June—can you come to it? The hours are 4 to 6."

The friends generally send two replies—a formal one to the hostess with whom they are unacquainted, and a friendly one to the heroine of the occasion.

INTRODUCING.—The success of such a party entirely depends on the number

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of introductions which are made. The bride-to-be must be on the alert. She has a good afternoon's work cut out for her. She must stand near the door of the reception-room, to greet her friends on their arrival and introduce them to the hostess. This done she should introduce her *fiancé* to them. She should get certain of her intimates to act as stewards for her, to help her in effecting introductions and in taking people down to tea. When she goes down to tea herself she should leave some one in her place near the door of the reception-room, who is likely to know the guests as they come in, and can help the hostess to receive them. A party of this kind contains many elements of success, as people are interested in the object for which it is given. If the bridegroom has any speciality, it is well

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to make a feature of it; if he is a singer or reciter he should be asked to perform, and should be specially introduced to any one with whom he is likely to have tastes in common.

XI

AFTER THE WEDDING

THE DULL TIME.—There is something about going to a wedding which leaves one very dull in the evening. All the hours for meals are disturbed—it is the same thing which makes people ill-tempered on Sundays—one doesn't eat enough at lunch, and one can't eat enough at dinner. Between the two is the hybrid meal, a cross between the wedding breakfast of old days and the wedding tea of later date, and the mixture of champagne and little sandwiches, ices and fruit, results in the condition I have hinted at. No after-meal can be quite satisfactory until the

AFTER THE WEDDING

time for supper has arrived, and the rest of the day is inevitably dull when the wedding party is over.

THE THEATRE.—An evening at the theatre is the pleasantest solution of the problem of finishing up this difficult day—one seems too much dressed for the early hour in addition to having curious meals. An evening at the theatre is the most natural conclusion to such a day, and it is a true relief to sit down quietly and be amused by other people instead of tearing oneself in two to please others, often without success. As one sinks back in one's stall to listen to the absurdities of the comic man, or the banalities of the topical song, one cannot fail to appreciate the efforts of the entertainers, which are, after all, more successful than one's own.

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ARRANGEMENTS.—Country people, coming up to town, think that a dinner then and there after the wedding, ending with an adjournment to the theatre, would be the easiest solution of the question. But the Londoner knows that such a jaunt would be impossible, as people have to get back to all manner of distances in order to dress for the evening. By far the best plan is to let the wedding party disperse, to rest and refresh themselves as they please, appointing a time of meeting at the box-office about a quarter of an hour before the play begins.

TICKETS.—The host and his sons (or failing them the groomsmen) should be responsible for the tickets, taking care to arrive in good time with an envelope full of vouchers. The people at the box-office should be told that they are

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to give seats to any of the guests of this particular party. The most important people will be seated in the boxes, and the bridesmaids and grooms-men will like to be together so that they may talk over the events of the day.

THE SUPPER PARTY.—I cannot imagine a more successful supper party than one I went to a little while since at the Savoy on the occasion of a Scottish wedding. A part of the dining-room was reserved for the wedding party (about eighty people altogether), and there were festoons of coloured ribbons above the tables, representing all the different colours in the host's tartan. The room was beautifully decorated with flowers, and all the little parties round the different tables, each containing eight or ten people, were well arranged. The

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bridesmaids and groomsmen had a table to themselves—a “young” table echoing with laughter. At the high table sat the kindly host, and some of the most important guests—the hostess presiding over another.

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XII

SUPPER PARTIES

A WELCOME ENTERTAINMENT.—A great point in successful entertaining is to offer the right thing to the right people. It is very trying to have all the trouble of entertaining your friends and then to think you have given them something that they have not enjoyed. You may invite an actor to Sunday lunch and find that he would much rather not have come out so early on his only day of rest, or you may press a clergyman to come in to Sunday supper and find that he has only accepted the invitation for fear of

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offending you, and that he is almost too tired to speak. Afternoon gatherings are far from welcome to a woman who has to come straight from the office to them, and a dinner party is not acceptable to a person who is just going to deliver a long lecture. He only wants the lightest refreshment beforehand, and a substantial supper afterwards. Visitors should not be invited to dinner to meet a lecturer or actor who is staying in the house, he wants to be quiet before he goes on the platform or the stage, so as to concentrate his mind on what he is going to do. These are only a few of the examples I could give of unwelcome entertainments, but I have come across a good many of them in my time, and some which have been no pleasure to either hostess or guest.

A SUPPER PARTY.—It is impossible

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to predict success for any particular entertainment, but there is perhaps more chance for a supper party than for anything else. Every one is pleased at being invited, and the impromptu supper is one of the most welcome of entertainments. The meal seems to come at the moment when one is most disposed for enjoyment, when the fatigues of the day are over, and one feels in the humour to talk. Supper after the play is always an agreeable idea. The lights are out in the theatre, the gay crowd is dispersing in every direction, and one feels a desire to spend a little while in sociable fashion, and talk over what one has seen. This is partly what makes the theatre-supper such a success, all the company is interested in the same thing, and one has one's subject ready to hand.

Once upon a time an impromptu supper

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could not easily have been managed after the play; the women would have been packed off home in their broughams, and some of the men would have gone to supper at their clubs, but nowadays there are plenty of smart restaurants to which ladies can be escorted—so smart indeed that no one would be allowed to enter except in evening dress. A band plays, a *recherché* meal is served, and there is amusement in watching the people at the different tables, and a general feeling of gaiety about the scene.

AFTER THE THEATRE.—The smart restaurants referred to are apt to be very crowded during the Season, and it is not always possible to get a table unless it is ordered beforehand. So when one is giving a theatre-party it is wise to secure a table in the morning, and then one can see that it is in a

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good situation, and can be sure of one's friends being comfortably placed. Name-cards would not be used at a restaurant unless the party was given in a private room; the host would tell the guests how they were to sit, or else invite them to seat themselves without ceremony. The restaurants close pretty early in London, so that it is better not to waste any time before commencing supper. The young lady described in the Victorian novels who had the habit of "toying with her food" would find she had not eaten much before closing-time arrived. Bright conversation is welcome at supper as elsewhere, but every one should help themselves quickly, and not keep the courses waiting.

DECORATIONS.—A bachelor host will sometimes give an order to a florist to

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decorate his supper-table specially, and to place a buttonhole in each place. After the theatre is over the party get away with as much expedition as possible, and proceed to the restaurant in broughams, cabs or hired *coupés*, according to circumstances. The host leads the way into the room, so that there is no trouble in finding the table. A nice wind-up to the evening is to hire *coupés* to call at the restaurant and drop all the guests at their respective destinations.

A GIGANTIC SUPPER PARTY.—Gigantic supper parties are given in the Season at large hotels. The invitation cards are sent out in the following fashion :

“ Mr and Mrs BLANK
request the pleasure of
Mrs ASTERISK’S
company at supper,
at the Hyde Park Hotel, Albert Gate, on Tuesday,
27th June, at twelve o’clock.

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"'At Home' 10.30 p.m. Dancing after supper. R.S.V.P. to 103 Grosvenor Square."

Supper is served at this late hour if the host and hostess number any important theatrical people amongst their guests, and this gives them time to dress and come on after they have finished acting. The guests begin to arrive about eleven, and the host and hostess stand at the head of the staircase to receive them. Either the host or hostess or some near relation asks the guests if they are acquainted with the people with whom they are going into supper, so that introductions may be effected if required. The guests then pass on into the reception-room, and greet their friends and admire the decorations. Sometimes a little programme of music and recitations is given during the interval before

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supper, but more often the band plays some dance tunes, so that the young people can indulge in the popular two-step.

GOING INTO SUPPER.—When supper is ready the band plays a stirring march, and everybody proceeds towards the supper-room. A supper-card is given to each guest on arrival, inscribed with the number of the table at which he or she is to sit, also the names of the guests who are to be seated at it. At a glance one knows the worst! One is to be taken in by the man one has quarrelled with, or to sit opposite the woman whom we have been meaning to call upon for years! But a London hostess does not often make such mistakes as this; one is more likely to find people one knows well, or whom one would like to know better. The tables hold from six to

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eight persons, and it is not usual to put married couples at the same table. The host makes the tour of the supper-room before the commencement of the meal to make sure that every one is comfortably seated. If the host and hostess have many relations they try to scatter them about at the different tables as much as possible, so that they shall act as deputy hosts and look after the guests who are near them.

AT SUPPER.—Supper is served *à la Russe*, and commences with soup, and goes on through a variety of cold *entrées*, till the meal is terminated by coffee and liqueurs. Then the ladies adjourn to the lounge, and the gentlemen rejoin them speedily, after they have had a cigarette, and dancing begins in real earnest, and is continued until the small hours. I went to a very successful party of this

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kind a little while since at the Hyde Park Hotel, given by Mr and Mrs B. Hannen (the hostess is a daughter of Lady Morell Mackenzie). The host and hostess received their guests at the head of the staircase, which was decorated with arches of red rambler roses, and all the reception-rooms were canopied with flowers and foliage, roses in one, and pink peonies in another. Many celebrities were present, and a number of beautiful toilettes were seen. There was not a single hitch in the entertainment, and every one was as well looked after as if he or she had been the only guest.

XIII

A VALENTINE PARTY

THE COTILLON.—The cotillon seems particularly in place at a valentine party, so it should certainly be the selected entertainment if practicable. Invention on the part of the hostess, two spirited leaders, and a party of young people quick in taking ideas — these are the principal requisites for this particular form of amusement, and, I must also add, sufficient space in which to carry it out. Some of the most successful cotillons have taken place in Florence, where the old palaces provide plenty of space for the young people to dance in

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and out; the large bare rooms of a Paris hotel, with its chandeliers and parquet floors, also form a suitable background for the dance, which is half a game, whilst the old oak wainscots of an English country - house frown down in surprise at the vagaries of the dancers. Handsome favours form half the enjoyment of the American idea of a cotillon, but the young people over here care more for the dance itself.

THE INVITATIONS.—A little fancy is allowable in the invitations for a valentine party. They may be printed on a lace-bordered sheet, like an old-fashioned valentine, or on a large invitation card, printed in Pompadour colours, or with a silver heart in the place of a monogram. “Mrs (or Miss) Dash, at home, on Valentine’s Day,” should be the wording of the invitation, with “dancing” or

A VALENTINE PARTY

"cotillon" in one corner. The hours can be 9 to 12, as for a Cinderella, or 10 o'clock, without any hint of when the entertainment is to cease. It must be quite a young people's party, and, if possible, there should be an equal number of either sex. Fancy dress would be a great addition to the evening, and, if this is decided on, it should be added to the card. Powdered hair with ordinary dress would serve, if fancy dress is impracticable, or every one might be told to come in masks, which might be taken off after the first dance, when the engagements for the evening had been made.

DRAWING FOR PARTNERS. — But the feature of the evening should be the drawing for partners which has been associated with the day from Pagan times. It will be remembered that young men and

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maidens used to draw lots for their sweethearts in ancient Rome, on St Valentine's Day, and the youth had to be *cavalier servant* to his lady for the rest of the year. The early Christians tried to substitute the names of patron saints, but without much success. The young man who draws the name of a young lady at a Valentine party nowadays is only responsible for her happiness for the evening; he must be her partner for the cotillon, and take her down to supper. Drawing for partners is managed as follows: The names of all the company are written on slips of paper and placed in two bags, the names of the men in one, and those of the ladies in the other. Two tiny children, in fancy dress, stand at the foot of the stairs, or just outside the ball-room, and offer the bag to each person who enters.

A VALENTINE PARTY

A cupid costume is the best thing for the purpose, a little white dress, silver wings, and sandals, a wreath of roses on the head, a long garland across the shoulders, and a silver bow and arrows. The gentleman must at once present himself to his lady, and dance the first dance with her. At a small party the colour system will be found a great assistance in finding the partner. The names can be written on cards of different colours, and a coloured rosette (or a flower) can be given to each of the dancers, to match the card they have drawn.

THE COTILLON.—The cotillon is so often danced in this country that a long description seems unnecessary. Chairs are put round the dancing - room, and the couples sit side by side till their turn comes to dance. There are two

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leaders, a gentleman and lady, who lead the cotillon; they explain what has to be done, signal to the music to begin, and clap their hands when it is to stop. The gentleman is given a bell which he rings when he wishes for attention.

THE DICE.—Some of the pleasantest figures are the easiest, and those involving little apparatus are often the most enjoyed. There is a simple figure called "The Dice," which was invented by the Marquis de Caux (Madame Adelina Patti's first husband). The lady sits on a chair in the middle of the room, and two gentlemen throw the dice to see which should dance with her, the one who throws double-six getting the prize. The music strikes up, and all dance, the discarded partner dancing alone. Another pretty figure is called the "Triangles." The leader of the

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cotillon walks across the room, calling to three other ladies to follow her. They call for five, and the latter choose seven, till a triangle of ladies is formed. The man who leads the cotillon now leads a procession of men, who walk round the triangle in single file. When he gets opposite the one he wants to dance with, he claps his hands, and dances off with her, and this is the signal for every one to dance with the person who stands opposite to him. Another simple figure is as follows: The leader rises and calls another dancer to follow her, she calls another, and so on till the end, till they have formed a long winding procession like a snake. The men form a similar procession, and the two lines start off, in time to the music, in contrary directions. They go twice round the room, then

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out at each door and round the landing. As one procession comes in at the door, they meet the other coming out, and pair off with one another, just as they happen to meet, the heads of the lines dancing together, then the two who come second, and so on till the end, a waltz being played all the time.

THE LOOKING - GLASS.—The looking-glass figure is always a success, because everybody knows it. The lady sits in the centre of the room with a mirror in her hand (a silver - back glass being chosen for the purpose) and the gentlemen form a procession, and look over her shoulder into the mirror one by one. If she does not wish to dance with a man she wipes his reflection from off the looking-glass with her handkerchief; if she wishes to dance with him she rises, lays down the mirror, and dances

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off with him. "The Cushion" makes a good deal of fun. A large sofa-cushion is put on the ground before a seated lady, and the applicants kneel on it in turn. If the lady does not wish to dance with any one, she pulls the cushion away just as he is going to kneel down, otherwise she allows him to kneel, and he springs up and dances with her.

VALENTINE SUPPER.—The table should be decorated with heart-shaped devices in flowers, and there should be bonbons, and "kisses" and cupids holding *menus*. All the cakes and sweets should be heart-shaped, and there should be an abundance of roses, pansies, and forget-me-nots tied up with true lovers' knots. Sometimes a valentine is placed on each plate, some pretty present in a large envelope with a heart-shaped seal, sometimes a floral spray or buttonhole is

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laid beside each cover. Sometimes the cotillon concludes with a "post-office," kept by the two cupids who appeared earlier in the evening. All the dancers approach the post-office in turn (it is placed in front of two screens or in the centre of folding doors, or peeps out from the curtains of a bow-window) saying, "Is there a valentine for me?" The addressed envelope is then given to its owner, and general delight ensues.

XIV

A CAKE-WALK PARTY

SOMETHING NEW.—A novel entertainment is greatly appreciated at the present time of year, and an invitation to a cake-walk party will delight the younger members of the family. All the lively dances seem to come to us from America — the barn-dance, the Washington Post, and, finally, the cake-walk. Each dance has its own little story, and is accompanied by the gayest of tunes, sometimes a native melody, and sometimes a composition of M. Sousa's. The barn-dance was an actual part of the rustic revels in the South after the harvesting was over, and the

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proper thing at first (in America) was to dance it with a flat foot and a resounding step, to imitate the sound of wooden shoes. The cake-walk was first danced by the negroes on the plantation at the end of the harvest, when the best pair of dancers were awarded a cake as a prize. The fascination of the step and the style was first copied in American ball - rooms, and afterwards spread to Europe. London grows gayer when the cake-walk appears in the ball-room, or is seen on the stage, whilst Parisians are simply mad about it. The peculiarities of the "Kak-walk" enliven many a dull French party, and the most successful Christmas present for children has been a set of mechanical figures which go through this popular dance.

WHY IT IS POPULAR. — There are a number of reasons why the cake-walk is

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popular—its novelty, its strong individuality, and its very attractive tunes. But perhaps its flexibility is, after all, its greatest point, for every dancer is able to carry out any particular idea which occurs to him. The action and the step are more or less alike to start with, but an infinite variety of gestures can be introduced. The head and shoulders must be well thrown back, and the arms raised to the height of the shoulders, whilst each dancer should look as though he were trying to produce a most agreeable impression on his partner. But there is no limit in the variety of gestures and styles, and there is great opportunity for display of gracefulness and talent. The cake-walk can be made to express almost anything, and from entrance to exit there is plenty of scope for the individuality of the dancers.

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THE INVITATIONS.—There is room for a little originality about the invitations to a cake-walk party. The American flag may appear in one corner, or the picture of a dancing coon, or the stars and stripes may run across the outside of the invitation. If a plain invitation is preferred it may be embellished by a tiny bow of striped ribbon tied through the right-hand upper corner. The wording is the same as for an ordinary dance, Mrs So - and - so "At Home," and the date and hour, with the addition of the magic word, "cake-walk," in one corner.

FANCY DRESS.—Fancy dress is a good addition to a cake-walk as the dancers forget themselves more easily when they are dressed in different characters, and dance with greater *abandon*. Sometimes "coon costumes" are *de rigueur*, at other times the guests are allowed to

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be fancy-free. Coon dresses are highly suitable to the dance, the dresses worn by Miss May Yohé in *Christopher Columbus* serving as an excellent model for the costumes. Plantation dresses look characteristic in the simplest materials, blue calico coats, and skirts or trousers of red and white striped calico, and large plantation hats. If some of the party will consent to paint their faces brown, it will add to the general amusement. If the hostess wishes to limit the expenses of the dresses she can easily add "Calico Ball" to her invitation.

OTHER DRESSES.—The Golliwog is an excellent dress for a cake-walk party, and he should come accompanied by a "wooden doll" lady, attired as Sarah Amelia Ann, or Pierrot and Pierrette can dance the cake-walk in company,

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also Jack and Jill, Boy Blue and Miss Muffet, and a tribe of nursery pets. Fisher-boys and fish-wives can be partners in the dance, peasants of all descriptions from Watteau to Alsatian, harlequins and columbines, and all kinds of fairies and sprites. The long dress is unsuitable for a cake-walk dance, and the dresses above mentioned are all of the short-skirted variety.

THE EVENING.—When the evening arrives the house can be decorated in the American style with many garlands of smilax, and American flags can be draped above the doors. One of the sitting-out rooms can be turned into a little plantation, with a background of sugar-canies, palms, and foliage, and American chairs and hammocks. Instead of the ordinary supper-room, one might have an American bar, at which all

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manner of delectable ices and iced drinks might be dispensed by waiters clad in white. "Sherry ice" is an American speciality, and a very nice one; and "angel" cake (made chiefly of the whites of eggs) should certainly have a place on the buffet. Silver cake and golden cake are also amongst the recipes from across the Atlantic; the whites of the eggs being used for one variety, and the yokes for the other. American sweetmeats are already so well known that I need not dilate upon them further. The fashion of American "favours" might certainly be introduced, if there is a sit-down supper — a fanciful box of sweetmeats, or a bit of fancy jewellery, tastefully done up, placed beside each plate for each person to carry away as a souvenir.

DANCING.— The "coon" party being

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fairly started, things can scarcely help going well. Much amusement is afforded by the spectacle of the arrival of the guests, more especially when "darkey" costumes are worn. The programmes can have the American flag on the cover, or a picture of a dancing coon. The first part of the evening programme is in the ordinary fashion, only that there are more polkas, and barn-dances, and Washington Posts than fall to the share of the ordinary programme. At eleven o'clock commences the special feature of the evening—the Cake-Walk itself. The judges and all the non-dancers are seated on a raised platform at the upper end of the room, the band plays a Sousa March, and all the competing couples march in two-and-two, each gentleman holding his partner by the hand. They may come in any

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comic style they like, as it adds to the general amusement. Now the dance begins, and is eagerly watched, as the best couple is to be rewarded with a prize. The prize should be something handsome, such as a bow-watch, or a handsome bracelet — the jeweller who supplies the prize being asked to change it afterwards for two smaller articles, in case the lady and gentleman like to have something each. The way in which the prize is awarded varies in different places. Sometimes all the couples stand in a row, and the prize is held before each pair in turn, and is given to those who obtain the most applause. Sometimes three or even five judges are appointed, all experts at the art, and sometimes all the non-dancers are invited to vote. The second plan is perhaps the most fair, but there is one advantage

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about the last-mentioned method — it gives the people who are not dancing a distinct interest in the spectacle. And although the poets tells us that it is—

“Better to listen than to bear a part.

Better to look on happiness than to carry a full heart,”

this is a sentiment of which I have always entertained the greatest distrust, believing that there can be little enjoyment for the onlooker at any festive function unless he can feel he is assisting, in ever so small a way, towards making the evening a success.

XV

SOME ECHOES OF THE SEASON

NEW IDEAS.—Every new season brings new ideas in its train, and the present one has been particularly prolific in novel entertainments. Colossal parties have been given, and everything has been on a gigantic scale. Luncheon parties of thirty or forty people, either seated at one long table, or at several small ones, dinner-parties of double the number, arranged at different tables, each decorated in a different style, supper parties of two hundred people, given at some fashionable hotel, everything

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arranged beforehand, and with name-cards in each place—these are the kind of entertainments which have been given this year, and which have made little people afraid to entertain. One sees nothing of the hostess at these gigantic parties. One shakes hands with her on entering and on leaving, but that is all, she is merely a perceived personality, like the beautiful figure-head of a ship.

How to do It.—It is only a hostess with a very large set who can contrive to give a gigantic entertainment with success. Although the party is large it must not be lonely, it must not be like a chilly country garden-party, with people walking about in separate cliques, nor a big political party made up of a number of incongruous elements. However large the gathering it should be informed with life and unity, even if the people of

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many different sets are included it should be possible for them all to mix. The host and hostess should be surrounded with relations or intimate friends who will act as deputy hosts, and one of these should be placed at each table, if possible, so that they will exert themselves in making things go well. Married couples never sit at the same table at parties of this kind, and even the host and hostess preside over a different circle. The two "high tables" of course belong to the host and hostess, and the most distinguished guests are seated there. If a number of theatrical people are invited supper is usually fixed for twelve o'clock. Dancing both before and after the meal is generally a feature of the supper parties; music is more general after a dinner party of any number, performed either by one or

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two favourites who have lately appeared before Royalty, or some attractive band. People of moderate fortune cannot attempt to give the huge entertainments which have been the fashion of late, but they can often get hints from them which they should lay to heart in case they may ever have to give a very large party of their own.

HEAD - DRESS PARTIES.—Head-dress parties have been given once or twice this season, one enterprising charity even giving a ball at the Albert Hall with this idea, which had hitherto been reserved for the privacy of the country house. Quite the most successful head-dress parties have been given in the country at the shortest notice; the house-guests relying principally on their own ingenuity to supply the necessary make-up. A little joke of this kind is perhaps

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better suited to home life than to general society, but the idea is an amusing one, and may grow. Ordinary dress is worn, but the head must be adorned in some peculiar fashion by the aid of wigs and powder, head-dress, and paint. Some people aim at carrying out the style which best suits their type of face, whilst others try to lose their identity as much as possible. Many people have faces which belong to another century, and it is not until we add the mass of powdered hair, or the pointed beard and ruffle, that we know that they belonged to Gainsborough or Vandyke. The great thing is to aim at as much variety as possible, and I heard of a head-dress dinner the other day at which a Chocktaw Indian, a friendly Zulu, three Court ladies, and a clown were received by a Pierrot and Pierrette. A voting card was put

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before each comer, the gentlemen voted for the best make-up among the ladies, and the ladies wrote down their votes for the men. The interval before the gentlemen joined the ladies was utilised for the recording of the votes; the voting papers were afterwards collected by the hostess, and prizes were given for the two best head-dresses worn—one prize being for a gentleman, the other for a lady.

AN AMERICAN NOTION.—Progressive dinner parties are very much liked in New York, and they have been tried at one or two “boy and girl” dinners over here. Sometimes they are given at one long table, with all the men moving two places to the left after each course, taking their dinner roll and serviette with them each time. But the newest thing is to have the dinner

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(or lunch) laid on a number of separate tables, large enough to hold four persons, and for the ladies to accompany the gentlemen in their peregrinations. The hostess rings a bell after each course, and each couple arises, and repairs to the next table to the left, carrying their bread and their serviette and their champagne-glass. They find their new places by means of numerals placed at each cover, and an indication of the next table at which they are to sit is given by means of a flower. Each table has to be decorated with a different kind of flower, and there must also be a single spray of the colour which is employed in the table which comes next in the list. If a table is decorated with pink geraniums, a single spray of scarlet geraniums laid upon the cloth will serve as a little sign-post to indicate the bright

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red table which is next to be approached. This is very amusing for young people, but I should not advise a hostess to try it on the elderly epicure.

FOREIGN ETIQUETTE.— The English guests who went to Berlin for the Mayr-Eulenberg wedding had an interesting opportunity of comparing the etiquette which obtains in England and abroad in connection with such functions. The bridegroom did not sulk at the top of the chancel till the arrival of the bride as he would have done over here, but walked up the aisle in the procession, escorting the mother of the bride. After the wedding luncheon the ladies were escorted from the table by the gentlemen who had sat next them at the meal; this is also a custom never seen over here. Another interesting little piece of etiquette occurred about the departure

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of the bride—no one could say at what hour she was to leave, or what train she was to catch, as, the Emperor being present at the wedding, it was not possible for her to leave the castle until he gave her permission. This he did during the course of the afternoon, sending her a message that she might leave at five, and she went away in the quietest of serge travelling dresses, which made a great contrast to the magnificent toilette she had worn at the ceremony, half covered with old family lace. She went to the station in one of her mother's carriages, not in the bridegroom's carriage, as is the fashion over here. There was no throwing of rice and slippers—these in convenient demonstrations of goodwill being considered bad taste in Germany. Pearls were worn by many of the wedding

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guests on this occasion, the German ladies having got over the tiresome superstition which did not at one time allow them to wear these lovely jewels at a wedding, on the ground that pearls mean tears. In England pearls are the jewels which are considered more suitable to a young bride than any other gem.

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XVI

"LITTLE ENTERTAINMENTS"

SOMETHING TO DO.—There is a wide difference between parties given in London and the suburbs, for, whereas the ideal of a successful gathering with the town hostess is one at which no entertainment is required, people in the suburbs feel a great want of something to do when they meet. In London people like to meet one another and talk, and an entertainment must be something very novel and choice if they think it worth listening to. In the suburbs it is different. The circle is more limited, and people who are meeting one another every day feel the need

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of some special entertainment when they are asked to a party. All kinds of novel entertainments have been given in the suburbs and in the country of late, and some of them have served as topics of conversation for long before and after. Enigmatic invitations have been sent out by the hostesses, and the guests have been eagerly urged by their friends afterwards to give an account of what took place. People write to the papers secretly to know what is meant by the mysterious words in the corner of their invitation-card, saying, "What is a Golliwog party?" or "How must we dress for a Noah's Ark?" or "What is the meaning of a Model Tea?" The chroniclers are not always able to reply, as the essence of the party being its novelty, it is very likely that the hostess has invented it herself, and it may be

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a kind of entertainment which has never before been heard of on land or sea. The safest plan for an invited guest is to apply to the hostess for a little explanation beforehand, if he is in doubt as to how he is to prepare for the gathering.

A NOAH'S ARK PARTY.—One of the newest entertainments is the “Noah's Ark” party, and my readers may like to know “how it is done.” The invitations are sent out on an ordinary “At Home” card, with the words “Noah's Ark” written in one corner. Each guest has a pencil and a numbered card given him on entering, and on the card is written the name of an animal—donkey, cat, elephant, etc., and the words “sketched by” underneath, leaving a blank for the artist's name. Each player draws the animal alluded to on the

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blank side of the card, and after twenty minutes all the cards are collected and placed on the mantelpieces or in other prominent positions. The guests are then given another card, and requested to write on them what they think the animals are meant for. The "guessing card" has a row of numbers all the way down the card with blank spaces opposite, in which one writes dog, elephant, cat, or whatever one thinks that numbers 1, 2, and 3 of the exhibited pictures are intended for. The name is signed at the foot of the guessing card. The person who has guessed most of the animals is awarded a prize. Two judges then examine the drawings, and the one who has made the best sketch receives a prize. If the judges say that the cat is the best drawn, for example, the person who has sketched

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it goes up to receive the prize. The competition lasts for about an hour and a half. After this every one is handed a slip of paper with an animal's name written on it, and each gentleman has to find the lady who has the name of the same inhabitant of the ark written on her paper, and take her into supper. This makes a very amusing evening altogether, and the worst drawings produce the most fun.

THE GOLLIWOG PARTY.—The Golliwog party is simply our old friend Progressive Games, with a little picture of the golly in the midst of every table. Each drawing is a little different — Golly is alone in one picture, with Sarah Ann in another, and tiny cards with similar drawings are given to each guest on entrance, with a safety-pin to fasten them on by. The gentlemen

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have to find their partners by their having the same badges, and escort them to the table where the same Golliwog reigns. A different game is placed on each table, and five minutes is allowed for each. The programmes are arranged, as follows: "Deal Table, Tricks won, Partner," and each player must fill up the spaces. On the reverse side is written "Progressive Games," with "Name" and "Table" underneath, and a space opposite for each. The games are of every possible description. One hand of whist is played to start with, "fish ponds" will meet you at the next table, "tiddley-winks" at a third; the rat-trap is another favourite game—the rats have shot inside them, so that they can only be balanced in one particular way, and the difficulty is to get them inside the trap.

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Another amusing game is Animal Grab, in which each player has to claim his card, not by saying "grab" but by using the language of the animal whose picture appears on the card which is turned up. Wild shrieks are always coming from this table, and the players get so excited that they will cry moo when they ought to say mew. Four players sit at each table, and the winners get up and go on to the next table at the expiration of five minutes. This goes on till they get to the King table, where the winners remain, and play the others in turn. A first prize and a booby prize are given at the end of what is really an evening of very hard work.

A CHARACTERISTIC PARTY.—"Characteristics" comes next on my list, and this is simply a "guessing" game, which can

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be played either afternoon or evening. Each player has to bring a card with him on which are written six characteristics of some celebrity, either alive or dead. The card must be pinned to the coat like a book-badge, and the guests must try to find out one another's riddles, and inscribe them on a programme given them for the purpose. A prize is given to the best guesser. Supposing the celebrity chosen were the corner-man at the Moore and Burgess Minstrels the characteristics would be — 1, alive; 2, black but comely; 3, singing; 4, playing; 5, dancing; 6, always in town. If it were a distinguished politician it would be — 1, alive — very much so; 2, eyeglass; 3, orchid; 4, loquacity, and so on. It is permissible to draw and paint the symbols instead of writing them, and Mr Bernard Shaw

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was thus expressed at a party recently given in Bedford Park. The objects painted on the placard were as follows: —A red wig, a trumpet, a brussels sprout, a very large capital I, a demon in a monk's hood, and a puzzled-looking man with a finger to his forehead. The brussels sprout stood for vegetarianism, whilst the last-mentioned symbols stood for "The Devil's Disciple" and "You never can tell," the names of two of Mr Shaw's plays.

XVII

MORE ENTERTAINMENTS

A NEW COLLECTION.—I find that suggestions for “little entertainments” are often so welcome to my readers that I have collected a few more little novelties in the hope that they may be useful in giving ideas, even if they are not exactly followed out.

A PROVERB PARTY.—A “proverb party” is the first on my list, and it makes a good deal of fun for young people. The invitations are sent out on an ordinary “At Home” card, with “proverb party,” or “proverbs,” written in the right hand lower corner. The guests have nothing

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to prepare, all the trouble is taken by the hostess. To her falls the arduous task of writing down some two hundred proverbs on long narrow slips of paper, and dividing them in two, and then pinning them all over the rooms: drawing-room, ante-room, morning-room, and hall should all be utilised for the purpose, and the slips should be pinned up and down the curtains, screens, and table-covers, mantelpiece borders, and photo frames, and on every available place. When the guests arrive, coffee is served, and after a while the hostess rings a bell, and reads the rules for the game aloud. The guests are given large sheets of foolscap paper and a packet of pins, and they have to try and find as many proverbs as possible, and pin the two halves together on to the large sheet. Two prizes are to be given to those

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who gain the greatest number of proverbs, one for a gentleman, and the other for a lady.

THE RULES.—The rules differ according to the notions of the hostess, but I think the following, which were used at a recent party of this description, are as good as any.

Every one may take three beginnings and find the endings, pinning the two together. After that he may only take one beginning and find the ending, pinning them together as before. Each is to count the number of proverbs he has completed. No one may take an ending to begin with. He must take the beginnings and add to them the endings.

The game is to last three-quarters of an hour.

THE GAME.—Every one now flies about, and a lively time ensues, and the scene

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is so amusing that the hostess feels repaid for all her trouble. Just before the time is up the hostess rings her bell again and says, "Last five minutes," which adds considerably to the excitement. The hostess now asks what lady and gentleman have the highest number. One lady has perhaps succeeded in getting twenty-two proverbs complete; the hostess reads them aloud to make sure that they are correct, and presents her with a prize. I may mention that only those proverbs are counted and read which belong to the two winners, as it would take too much time to read all. When the game is finished, the hostess says "Has anyone a higher number than fifteen?" The winner exclaims, "twenty-two," or "twenty-three," as the case may be, and his or hers are accepted and read aloud.

AN EXAMPLE.—I have beside me a

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piece of foolscap pinned all over with odds and ends of proverbs, which figured at a recent party; very amusing it looks. Here are some of the scattered fragments: "a word is enough," "do till you try," "many minds," "time brings all things about," "so many men so," "idleness," "you never know what you can," "to the wise," "patience and," "rusts the mind." My readers may amuse themselves with putting them together. Type-written proverbs would be better than written ones. The hostess can be on the look-out for original proverbs, and there are many books in which such things can be found. "Everybody's Book of Proverbs," can be had for six-pence.

AN ADVERTISEMENT SUPPER.—This is a new kind of party, which was recently invented by a well-known hostess. The

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first part of the evening was filled up in the ordinary way with music and conversation, but every one had to appear at the supper-table with a coiffure suggestive of an advertisement. A prize was given for the best riddle (one to a gentleman, another to a lady), and another for the best solution of the same problems. At the party referred to, the first prize was won by a lady who typified somebody's three star brandy by means of a coiffure illuminated by electric light. The second prize was won by the Swan fountain pen, a lady having a very pretty imitation swan made so as to fit her head exactly, the pen being put in its mouth. One lady wore a cupid on a powder-puff in her hair, so as to signify *Poudre d'amour*. A bright little lady had a star and a line on a black sappho hat, signifying the White Star Line. A

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toy ox in a doll's tea-cup was easily guessed, as was the cracker head-dress, which symbolised Tom Smith. A head-dress like a wedding cake stood for a famous advertiser; there were wreaths of silver leaves and orange-blossoms round it, and a tulle veil floating down the back. One ingenious young man wore a Liberty cap, and another had a loaf of bread with 1872 on it, to represent Good-yer, or Good-year—I forget which. "Singers" was easily represented by a number of birds on a hat. The supper-table presented a most amusing spectacle, and some of the ideas were not only quaint, but becoming.

A COPPER TEA.—A good many copper teas have been given of late in the suburbs, but I don't know that they have anything to recommend them with the exception of their novelty. The aim proposed to the company is that all the

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guests should try to see how much they can buy for a penny—this pennyworth to be brought with them, and voted on by a committee. At a party in a very æsthetic neighbourhood the first prize was reluctantly given to a penn'orth of Spanish onions, so much seemed to be there for the money! And an ingenious guest at another house arrived with some coals, some wood, a box of matches, and a rasher of bacon. The first prize was won by a funny little farmyard made of paper, cardboard, and egg-shells—a wonderful little toy.

A FLORIN TEA.—Florin teas are also being given, but they are not so new as the penny ones. A programme containing a certain number of riddles is given to each person, a blank space being left opposite for the answers. All the replies are contained in a two-

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shilling piece, some in the design and some in the letters. All manner of combinations can be got out of the letters of the word "Edwardus." For example — on a flower (dew), a battle (war), an attraction (draw), a colour (red), and a term of endearment (dear), "a kind of fruit" must be answered by "dates," a goblin stands for "Imp.," "a musical instrument," the Irish harp, "part of a menagerie," the lion. A certain amount of time is allowed for the solution of the riddles, and a prize is given for the best supply.

CHOOSING PARTNERS. — Some fanciful method of choosing partners for supper is often resorted to at entertainments of this kind. Sometimes the gentlemen draw lots for their partners; sometimes the prize-winners lead the way into supper, those who have won the "booby"

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prize bringing up the rear; sometimes people are told to take in whom they like. A pretty idea is for the hostess to give a buttonhole to each guest, and to tell each gentleman to look out for the lady whose flower matches his own. Another plan is to give sprays of lily-of-the-valley to the ladies, with the name of their escort twisted round the stem. Sometimes the names of celebrated couples are put into two bags, and people draw for partners. Adam and Eve, Romeo and Juliet, Jack and Jill, and Darby and Joan are amongst the selected names, the gentleman who draws "Romeo" has to look out for "Juliet," and escort her into supper.

XVIII

AMUSEMENTS AT COUNTRY GARDEN PARTIES

IN THE COUNTRY.—I once spent part of my summer holiday in the neighbourhood of Bungay, and I was much struck by the ingenuity of the hostesses in providing amusements for their guests. It was the “garden-party season” when I was there, and we set out for some function of this kind every day, receiving as many bows and curtsies by the way as though our journey behind the fat pony had been something in the nature of a royal progress; for the relations I was staying with, and their

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fathers before them, have lived a long while in those parts, and every one knows them. I saw many beautiful gardens and grounds during my visit, and I was kindly welcomed everywhere as the cousin of my cousins. I felt that beautiful Suffolk occupied a large portion of the world, and when I mentioned to an antiquarian that I had come from London I was promptly told that there was a map dated A.D. 400, in which East Anglia was named, while there was nothing about London except the name of a ferry.

MAD CROQUET.—We went to a garden party every day, as I have said, and there was a different amusement at each. Croquet and tennis were played with great gusto by the younger members of the party; but there was always some little entertainment in

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addition for the sake of the non-players. Croquet itself was played with many variations, and prizes were distributed to the successful competitors. "Mad Croquet" was scored by means of points. You counted one for every loop you went through, the game consisting of ten points. If another player croqueted your ball after it had been through the loop, you had to take one point off the score. "Ten minutes Croquet" was another novelty, and the object was to see how many hoops the players could get through in the given time. I saw this played in the form of a tournament at one place, with the partners arranged beforehand, a lady and gentleman playing together. The worst players were gradually sorted out, and "the finals" played by those who had done the best. Time is very

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important in this game, and it was amusing to see the quiet energy with which it was played, the young men running from point to point, and no one uttering a word! Pretty little presents were given for prizes, heart-shaped silver boxes, or flower-pots in Dutch china, with quaint figures of little Dutch girls all round.

AN AFTERNOON DANCE.—At some of these parties the weather was so fine that it was quite possible to dance out of doors, and dancing accordingly took place on the tennis lawn, which was covered with a wooden floor for the occasion; the floor of a tent being the usual thing used, with a canvas roof added in one case. A refreshment buffet was placed under the trees, and little chairs and tables were scattered about on the grass. The band which played

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for the dancers was hidden amongst the trees. It is a long time since afternoon dances were in fashion, but they seemed to be very much liked in the country.

A GUESSING COMPETITION.—What pleased me most was the various competitions, and the trouble which had been taken to get them up. In London a hostess has only to go to an agent and ask him to send her an entertainer, or a band, but in the country people have to think of things for themselves, and to take the trouble of arranging every detail. At the house I was staying at a large chenille veil was mounted on a white paper and pinned up over the porch, and a little jar partially filled with beans was hung up among the creepers. Each visitor was supplied with a programme and a

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pencil, and invited to state "How many spots were on the veil?" and "How many beans in the jar?" The answers were to be inserted in a neat little straw wallet which hung on a neighbouring nail, a prize being given to the successful guesser of either puzzle. One might say there was not much trouble about arranging this problem, but imagine the industry of the person who counted all those nine hundred and thirty-seven spots in the first instance! Other people did it by calculation, but the hostess had to be perfectly exact.

AN ADVERTISEMENT COMPETITION.—
The competition which amused me the most was one which was made out of advertisements. A curtain of pale blue art muslin hung down before a dear little brown straw summer-house at the rectory, and quite a pretty little picture

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gallery was arranged inside entirely formed of advertisements. They were pretty coloured ones that one sees inside the Christmas or holiday numbers of sixpenny papers. There were twenty in all, with a plain number on each, and one was given ten minutes in which to inscribe their correct appellations in a programme. Sunny Jim was quickly recognised, also Monkey Brand and Quaker Oats, but the different kinds of beef extracts and nursery foods were more tiresome to identify, and nearly every one thought that the Ogden's Guinea Gold cigarettes was a food. If the name of the article advertised happened to appear in the picture that portion was neatly cut out in the most tantalising way, the biscuit or piece of soap in the illustration being represented only by an oval space. A prize was

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given to the successful competitor. The programmes were adorned with pretty red pencils, and "Please keep the pencil" was written at the foot of the notice on the tent.

A NAIL-DRIVING CONTEST.—The nail-driving competition hails from America; but it was in a country place in England that I saw it. A plank was provided with the nails lightly stuck in, and the lady who managed to drive them home with the smallest number of strokes was the winner. Some thirty people took part in this competition, and the prize was an ornamental tool-box.

A SMELLING COMPETITION.—The most original competition of all took place at a garden party given by Mr and Mrs Rider Haggard. This was a smelling competition, and it was said to be very difficult. Twelve little bottles were

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offered to each visitor in turn, who was invited to write down the proper title of each. No names were placed on the phials; they were simply numbered from one to twelve. They contained all manner of unexpected things—from gin to eucalyptus. The prize was won by a lady, who was much congratulated on the superior power of her olfactory nerves.

XIX

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A HAY-MAKING PARTY.—Any excuse serves for a country party, for as long as the weather is fine it is always delightful to be out of doors. The end of the hay-making, or the time when the apples must be gathered, or the corn is cut—any of these things make an occasion for a gathering, and an excuse for having tea in the open air. The hay-making party is particularly acceptable to children, who have a good romp in the hay. The first thing to be done is to make a great “nest” in the hay—a clear space where the children

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can play all kinds of games, both running-about ones and quiet ones. The making of this nest should be done by the children on their arrival, as they will enjoy tossing the hay about, and sitting in the nest they have made for themselves. There should be tea out of doors, and races for prizes; and if it is possible to bring a piano into the meadow, there can be dancing and musical chairs. But what children like better than anything else is a competition of some kind, with a few simple prizes for the winners.

A HAT COMPETITION.—A hat competition makes a good deal of fun, and there are several ways of arranging it. For a children's party the best plan is as follows:—Give each child a roll of *crêpe* paper—the kind which is sold for lamp-shades—and allow half an hour for

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the making of the hat. There should be a plentiful supply of needles and threads and scissors and thimbles, or, better still, the children should be told to bring their thimbles in their pockets. Nothing but the *crêpe* paper must be used in the construction of the hats. Every colour should be provided for the sake of making a variety. A prize should be given for the prettiest hat—a Japanese sunshade, or a fan.

ANOTHER WAY.—A different style of hat competition is much in vogue at bazaars, and it sometimes forms a feature at country garden parties. All the gentlemen are asked to make hats, and a committee of ladies appointed to judge results. A hat-box or a hat-bag is given to each competitor, with the hat and the materials inside. The competitors are seated on a platform, and

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there are rows of seats before it for the audience, the judges occupying the front row. When all are seated the secretary gives the signal by saying "Open boxes!" (or "Open bags," as the case may be) and the workers open their parcels and set to work. A straw hat is found in each box, together with the requisite materials for trimming it. There will be yards of pink ribbon in one, a garland of flowers in another, wings and velvet in a third, needles and thread in all. Twenty minutes is allowed for the making of the hats, and prizes are given for the best performance.

THE ACTORS' FÊTE.—Those who were present at the hat competition at the actors' fête at the Botanical will know how very amusing such a thing can be made. They will remember that some of the performers were consciously funny,

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and others unconsciously so, that some of them handled the ribbons and feathers with the air of an expert, whilst others would take out a bird upside down without the least idea how to apply it to a hat. Mr Rutland Barrington would be heard plaintively asking for safety-pins, whilst another actor would be trying to sew with such a long thread that his hand went above his head with every stitch. Most of the competitors put their hats on one knee when they were working at them, as if they were banjos. Mr Hayden Coffin made quite a nice hat, something very dainty in blue and mauve; but then he is very clever with his hands—can mend a clock or a watch, and makes a gold bangle every year for his wife's birthday present.

THE BUTTERFLY TRICK.—The “Button-

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sewing Competition" is very popular in the country, and it is simplicity itself. Each person is given a piece of cloth, and a number of waistcoat-buttons, and told to sew on as many buttons as they can in a given time. A newer competition is the making of a butterfly, which allows some scope for artistic taste. Each player takes half a sheet of notepaper and folds it neatly in half, then drops a little paint from a tube of oil-colour exactly on the crease in the centre. Two more drops of different colours are placed on either side, the paper is folded again, and the paint is manipulated with a knife into the shape of a butterfly. The antennæ may be put in with a pencil. The paper is then opened, and the result displayed. The prettiest butterflies get prizes, and there is sometimes a prize for the worst one.

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JACKAL CROQUET.—Croquet is always popular in the country, and new variations on the game are always welcome. The latest one is called "Jackal Croquet," and is an ingenious device for the utilisation of bad players. It is played in the usual way, only that the "jackal" player becomes a rover as soon as he has passed the first hoop and is thenceforth at the disposal of his partner, who makes use of him as she likes. The name is suggested by the old idea of the jackal being the humble attendant of the lion.

XX

REGATTA PARTIES

A GOOD EXCUSE.—The various regattas which are held on the Thames during July and August are useful in encouraging a taste for athletics; but they are chiefly interesting to the feminine mind because they form an excuse for the giving of parties. Henley is of course the great event of the river season, but after this annual festival is over there are many smaller regattas which are very agreeable in their way, and form an excuse for the dispensing of hospitality. Maidenhead, Shiplake, Wargrave, Molesley, each becomes the

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centre of attraction in turn, like timid country hostesses who follow the lead of the lady of the manor, and any one who has a house on the banks of the river should not fail to take advantage of the occasion. It is always good policy to encourage any local institution, and the giver of the party earns the thanks of his townspeople in addition to the gratitude of his guests.

A RIVER PARTY.—The difficulties of giving a river party are so great that many people quail before the thought, and there are not a few householders who desert their abode at the psychological moment for fear of being forced into hospitality. But there are others who have a greater sense of social duty, and who delight in sharing the beauties of their holiday home with all their friends at the time when the little

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river resort has its brightest moment of the year. All the boats and gardens are decorated with flowers and flags by day, and coloured lights by night. All the pretty punts and canoes and gondolas from miles round are gathered together in one spot, gay parties on launches and motor boats add to the beauty of the scene, and all the young people are attired in their daintiest dresses. Such a sight cannot fail to appeal to the jaded Londoner, and it seems a pity not to attempt an entertainment which contains within itself so many elements of success.

THE INVITATIONS.—“Whom to invite” is the next question which presents itself when once the giving of the party is settled. I should feel almost inclined to say “everybody,” for there is always plenty of room in a garden, and “the

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more the merrier," holds good in this instance. All the friends who have entertained us in town should be invited down for the occasion, as well as any acquaintances we have made in the neighbourhood. The invitations must be carefully worded if we are anxious to get people to come down from town. The hours should be sufficiently long to allow of plenty of choice, and the times of the trains should be printed on the card. If carriages are to be sent to meet the trains this will offer an additional inducement to the guests, or if this is not possible an arrangement may be made with a local livery-stable man to provide a certain number of carriages and brakes to convey the visitors from the house to the station to meet the last train, at some slight nominal charge, such as sixpence a head. In this case

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a printed or typewritten letter can be enclosed in the invitation, beginning:—
“Dear Mr or Mrs So-and-so,” and saying “I have been able to make arrangements for a certain number of conveyances to take guests from here to the station for the last train (11.15) at the rate of 6d. a head, and hope you will be able to stay for that train, and will kindly let me know.” The invitation should be printed on the usual “At Home” cards, and worded as follows:—

Maidenhead Regatta and Concert.

Mrs RIVERSIDE,

“At Home,”

Saturday, 8th July,

2.30 to 10.30.

THE RIVER RETREAT,
MAIDENHEAD.

R.S.V.P.

The times of the trains can either be printed at the back of the card, or enclosed in a separate leaflet.

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STEWARDS.—Such a large party wants a good deal of managing, and can scarcely be attempted without the aid of a certain number of people to act as stewards under the direction of the host. Some young men can be invited as house guests and asked to make themselves useful in looking after the visitors from town, to meet them at the station, to help them in getting off for the train, to see that they have refreshments, and to lend a hand in taking them up the river. All the boats of the establishment must be at the service of the guests, and it is a good plan to hire a couple of electric launches so that all the visitors can get a sight of the course. The lawn must be provided with plenty of seats, rustic chairs predominating, and the older members of the party will be quite

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as well pleased to watch the racing from the garden as to brave the heat of the sun in open boats.

REFRESHMENTS.—Refreshments are a serious matter at a regatta party, and I am afraid that the proper course of treatment for a river-guest is much the same as that which Mr *Punch* prescribes for keeping the affections of a husband. “Feeding the brute” is no light matter on the river, and the careful hostess will be astonished at the amount of food and the gallons of drink that will be consumed under the circumstances. The ice-pail is an important factor in these entertainments, and every kind of “cup” and cooling drink is greatly appreciated. Tea should be served on the lawn on a number of little tables, one for tea, one for cakes, and one for fruit, etc. A number of cooling drinks

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should be at hand to offer the guests on arrival, and ices, served after the tea hour, will be greatly appreciated. The party should not commence before 2.30 or 3, because it is too much strain on most establishments to provide two heavy meals in one day. Supper can be served either in a large tent or in the house, according to circumstances, but a meal in a tent is the nicer, as it is next to being in the garden. It should be served on a number of little tables, each decorated with flowers, and supplied with *menu* cards or not, according to taste. The ices can be brought in *en surprise*, the electric lights can be lowered, and models of the river-house illuminated from within and surrounded with the ices, can be brought in on large silver trays. A great block of ice, wreathed with

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smilax, and with an illuminated centre, can be placed in the centre of the tent, or there may be an American eagle, or a fleur-de-lys, if there are any Transatlantic or French visitors whom the host desires to honour.

THE RIVER CONCERT. — After the meal comes the river concert in the cool of the evening. If it takes place on the lawn the guests will seat themselves to hear it in comfort; if it is at a distance parties will go up the course in turn in various boats and launches. The garden can be illuminated whilst the guests are having supper, so that when they come out into it afterwards they find themselves in the midst of a fairyland. Programmes of the concert fixed to Japanese fans are an addition to the comfort of the visitors, and the sight of all the boats crowded closely

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together on the river at the end of the lawn is a picturesque thing in itself. The strains of sweet music seem the one thing wanted to make the occasion perfect, and the evening hour is the charming conclusion of a truly delightful day.

XXI

FOOD, AND HOW TO EAT IT

How to Eat.—Once, when I was a girl, I paid a long visit to a relation who had a family of seven children. Seven little golden heads gathered round the table, seven pairs of bright blue eyes awaited their owner's turn to be helped, seven pairs of chubby hands were folded when grace was said. The description sounds pretty, and the sight was certainly charming, but there is no doubt that for the mother who presided at that table the meal was a piece of hard work. There was a dreadful amount of carving to be done, and a number of little

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dinners to cut up. Almost as soon as the first set of plates were put round the little ones were ready for a second help. Under these circumstances it appeared to me that the greatest service that could be done to the mother was to help the children to be independent as soon as possible, and I also had an idea that dinner must be a more interesting meal when a child is able to grapple with the difficulties of a knife and fork. So I undertook to teach the little child who sat at my left hand how to cut up its dinner. I had done this with marked success in the case of (let us say) Gladys and Katie, when the letter came to call me home. I read it aloud at the table, and discussed the date of my departure with my hostess. One of the little children listened for a while in silence, and then summoned up the situation in

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these pertinent words: "Cousin Lucie is going away! Then Alfie will never be able to learn how to eat!" She spoke as though eating were a rare accomplishment, of which I alone possessed the secret. I laughed at the time, and thought no more of the matter, but I have been reminded of it often in later years, when so many correspondents have sought my advice concerning what they should eat and how they should do it.

WHAT TO AVOID.—"Are there any dishes we ought to avoid?" is a question often asked by young girls. My reply is always in the negative, for all the silly restrictions have long since been abandoned with regard to what ladies should partake of. Lord Byron was responsible for a great deal of affectation when he said that he hated to see a woman eat. The beauties of the day

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thought it was elegant to appear to eat nothing, and to refuse most of the dishes which were set before them. Later on the reign of prunes and prism set in, and young people were told not to eat mushrooms, or game, or cheese—in fact, they had to pass by most of the best dishes on the table. At present it is fashionable to be something of a *gourmande*, and a man would not have a high opinion of the intelligence of his neighbour at the dinner-table if she sent away all the best dishes untasted.

THE COMMONEST QUESTIONS.—A good many letters are sent to the correspondence columns of ladies' papers asking how certain things should be eaten. As well as I can remember, the articles which people are most doubtful about appear to be oysters, fish, cheese, artichokes, asparagus, and fruit. I will

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recapitulate my answers on these points, in case they may be useful to any of my readers. Oysters should be eaten with an ordinary fork, not with a fish knife and fork. The shell must be kept steady with the fingers of the left hand. Fish *entrées* are eaten with an ordinary fork, though the fish knife and fork may be preferred in the case of mayonnaise. Fish, boiled or fried, is eaten with the convenient fish knife and fork.

ARTICHOKE.—An artichoke would be a difficult thing to tackle by any one who had never seen it eaten. It is one of the few things which it is allowable to eat with the fingers. Each leaf is eaten separately, and it should be held so that the tidy outer part is towards the spectator. When the edible part is finished the leaf should be laid on the plate. German ladies lay their artichoke

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leaves all round the edge of the plate in a circle, instead of leaving them in an untidy heap. Each leaf is dipped in the mayonnaise sauce before it is lifted to the mouth. French people make their own sauce of oil and vinegar, etc., and have it on a little plate by the side of the larger one. When the leaves have been eaten the assistance of a small knife and fork is required for the removal of the "choke," and for eating the delicious morsel at the end, known as the *fond d'artichaux*. Asparagus may also be eaten with the fingers, except it is very young and flabby, in which case it is better to eat it with a fork.

CHEESE.—The knife should never be raised to the mouth. A small piece of bread or biscuit should be held between the finger and thumb of the left hand, a little bit of cheese put on the top, and

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the two carried to the mouth together. Toast is often eaten with cheese, and, indeed, all through the meal in many cases. It is usually served in a small china toast-rack, so that it does not get sodden or flabby, or encounter any of the other ills which toast is heir to.

FRUIT.—Fruit is a difficult thing to eat gracefully, and it is only possible to give a few general rules. Apples and oranges, peaches and plums, should be cut first in halves and then in quarters, and small-sized pieces eaten with a dessert knife and fork. When cherries or grapes are eaten your stones (or seeds and skins) should be allowed to fall into your fingers, before they are placed quietly at the side of your plate, the back of the hand screening the action from the sight of the other guests. Strawberries and cream are usually eaten with

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a fork, but a spoon can be added if required. If a fork is used alone it is, of course, held in the right hand. The best kind of fork for eating strawberries with is the kind which the Americans use—it is like a spoon and fork in one, or one might describe it as a dumpy-looking spoon with the bowl cut out in prongs. By the aid of these prongs the strawberries can be eaten with ease and comfort.

GENERAL RULES.—The chief rules to remember are these:—Sit erect at table, and lift your fork to your mouth. Do not stoop over your food if you can avoid it. Use a fork alone unless there is anything which has to be cut. Do not use a spoon for sweets unless you use a fork also, for, though a fork may be used alone, the same thing does not apply to a spoon, except in the case of soup

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or ices. Judge for yourself how you will negotiate your food; do not cast furtive glances at your neighbours. Be careful not to hinder the service by delaying to reply to the servants who ask you what you will take. Put your serviette on your lap, and your roll at the side of your plate directly you are seated, so that there shall be no let or hindrance when the servant comes to put down the soup.

XXII

FOOD, AND HOW TO SERVE IT

WHAT to ORDER.—A hostess is a good deal judged by the kind of food she provides. Certain things are correct at certain times; ceremony is right at one time, and an appearance of carelessness at another. I came across a good illustration of this the other day in an article by a contemporary, who remarked, with some point, that though sirloin of beef was absolutely correct for the Sunday midday meal, we did not expect to see it at that hour on any other day of the week. Shoulder of mutton, or neck of mutton, the writer

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went on, was only fit for the school-room, but any joint of lamb was in place at lunch.

DISHES FOR LUNCH.—*Entrées* are always welcome at lunch, but *hors-d'œuvres* are not necessary; soup is not given except occasionally in the winter, and fish is only offered in disguise. Luncheon must not, however, be simply like a dinner with the first two courses omitted. The dishes must be dainty and appetising. Any kind of fish salad is nice, whether lobster, salmon, or tunny, etc. Curry makes a good *entrée* in hot weather; *fricassée* of chicken is another nice dish; in fact, poultry or game dressed in any way, and either hot or cold, always seems in place at lunch. Nice sweets may be offered at lunch, as it is rather a feminine meal, but they should not

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be of a substantial order. Devonshire junket, with stewed fruit makes a perfect luncheon sweet. Dessert is not expected at lunch, but strawberries are offered at a luncheon party when they are in season. It is usual to make rather a feature of the cheese course. Cream cheese is generally acceptable in summer, and brown biscuits are sure to be appreciated.

VARIETY.—A good hostess should be enterprising with regard to food. It is very easy to run into a groove where house-keeping is concerned, and there are houses at which one could almost prophesy what the *menu* would be at any given meal. "We are going to dine with my mother-in-law to-morrow," said a smart young woman to me the other day, "and I can tell you beforehand what we shall have—white soup,

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soles, fowls, fruit tart, and a pink cream. All very good things in their way, but not when you have them every time. I know that will be the dinner. I would take any bet you like on it." Of course our friends will not be as critical about our efforts as are our relations, more especially those extra relations with whom Providence endows us by marriage, for fear we should run short; but it behoves every hostess to beware that she does not offer a stereotyped *menu*. She should endeavour to add to her list of dishes, and be always looking out for new kinds of salad, and new sweets and *entrées*. Even the plainest dishes acquire a kind of style when prettily dressed. Fillet of beef, for example, looks twice as acceptable when it has green and red vegetables arranged all round it in alternate colours (French

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beans, sliced-up carrots or tomatoes, and green peas). Indian corn is a delicious vegetable, but how few people think of having it. It is possible to get it in London. Sherry ice is an American novelty which has found much favour of late. It is a good ice for a supper party, as it is not so frigidly cold as others are. Ices are twice as acceptable when offered in a pretty style. At an afternoon party the other day, got up for a well-known singer, all the ices were made in the shape of birds—a little red, or green, or cream-coloured bird perched in the middle of each plate.

SUMMER FOOD.—There are a great many dishes which are characteristic of summer, and not cared for at other times. Fruit salad, for example, is a summer food, and always disappears rapidly at parties during the Season.

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You can make it almost as well in the winter, by the aid of bananas and oranges, but people won't eat it then. Cool drinks have to be thought of in summer, and there should be a greater variety of these. A little while since there was no choice between champagne - cup and claret - cup (unholy mixtures very often, and getting weaker and weaker as the afternoon progressed), but lately there has been a fancy for cups made of cider and chablis, and they are far more suitable in hot weather.

ABOUT FRUIT.—Fruit is a great feature at afternoon parties in the summer, and it has the merit of being extremely decorative. The most convenient way to serve strawberries at a party is to place them in large china or silver bowls so that people can help

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themselves. Place a large silver spoon by the bowl, with little piles of plates near at hand, also spoons and forks and sugar and cream. The strawberries should be picked beforehand, as otherwise they are awkward to eat. Fruit is sometimes placed on separate tables at garden parties as it takes up a good deal of room with all its accompaniments. For dinner it may be arranged on a lordly dish, but if it appears at lunch it is served in a simple style—one might almost call it apologetic. As often as not the strawberries are brought in in their own round wicker basket, which has a certain beauty of its own, if you consider, and looks nice when it is placed on a china plate.

XXIII

FAMILY MANNERS

IN THE HOME.—My articles hitherto have been greatly guided by the questions I have received from correspondents, as they have shown me what subjects are most needed and what kind of information is required. But the subject I have chosen for this chapter is one on which nobody has ever asked me a single question, and I write about it simply because it has been long in my mind. Many people have written to me to know how they should appear to advantage in Society, but no one has ever consulted me as to how she

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should behave at home. No mother writes to the correspondence column of a ladies' paper to ask how she shall regulate the inner life of her household, or how she shall train her boys to grow up into well-mannered men. But home manners are the most important of all, for they are the foundation on which everything depends.

OLD AND NEW.—A great change has passed over us of late years with regard to the manners of daily life. The boy of early Victorian days was a ceremonious little creature. He called his parents "sir" and "madam," and would never have dreamed of starting a conversation at table, and scarcely of joining in it. He came in at dessert, and was given his glass of wine on condition that he made his grave little bow to each of the company in turn,

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an object-lesson in precedence which was possibly useful to him in later years, but must have been unspeakably trying at the time. One would not wish to see the ceremoniousness of those times revived, but it is possible that we are inclined to err in the opposite direction, by forgetting that respect is due to our relations as much as it is to our friends.

ON RESPECT.—Comfort in family life principally rests on respect. Homes are often made unhappy because people have so little respect for one another's privacy. Study is often rendered almost impossible in a home circle owing to the cruel interruptions which are such a trial to the concentrated mind. A mother will think nothing of bursting in upon a daughter, who is occupied in composition, to ask her opinion on the

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colour of a piece of silk, when perhaps it may take the girl hours to regain the thread of her thought. Reading for relaxation is also treated with the same unceremoniousness, and children will interrupt their mother ruthlessly when she has got to the most interesting part of a book. I have often been amazed at the intolerable rudeness I have witnessed in a home circle—rudeness that is taken for granted, and that no one would dream of resenting. I cannot see that affection is shown in all this. It seems to me we should be every bit as polite to our relations as we are to our newest acquaintance.

AT DINNER.—There is much need of reform in the conversations which take place at the family dinner-table. Why should there be so sharp a contrast between our manners at another

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person's table and our own? When we go out we try to be as pleasant to every one as we can, we try to make everything pass off well; we would not grumble at our food for the world. What horrible manners are displayed by a man when he criticises the food at his own table, making his wife miserable throughout the meal! Perhaps he says sarcastic things about the cook before the servants who are waiting at table, and are only too anxious to repeat the master's remarks downstairs for her delectation afterwards. When he talks in this way the high-water mark of misery is reached for the wretched woman who sits opposite to him, whose imagination calls up a vision of cook giving a month's notice next morning when she comes up to take her orders for the day.

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UNPLEASANT REMARKS.—It would be well if the heads of households would realise that the family dinner-table is the last place in the world where unpleasant remarks should be made. Nothing is worse for digestion than worry at meal-times, and it is singularly unfair to turn what ought to be a time of relaxation into a period of annoyance and distress. I have seen a father select one topic after another that he knew would be particularly painful to one or other of his family; treating of things in a general way to start with, then pointing the moral if the gauntlet was not quickly taken up. “Mary, with her silly High Church notions, will not agree with what I’ve said;” or, “Maud, who is such an advocate for women’s rights, may not like all I have said against lady-doctors.” The family

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sit round the board silent and quivering, as though they were being tried by the Inquisition, and wondering whose turn was coming next. Sometimes it is everybody together for a change. "The noses of this family cannot be called classic. You must all take after your mother's side of the house. In my family we all have good features." Or, "None of you girls have got on a pretty dress to-night; as for Mary, she looks perfectly horrible." Women are less addicted to being unpleasant at meal-times than men, but still I have known some who have indulged in sulky fits, and others who have seized the opportunity to make teasing remarks or to let out some innocent little secret of their daughters for the good of the general public. It is very annoying to be given away like this,

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and it generally ends by a girl losing all confidence in her mother.

TEASING.—There is a great deal too much teasing allowed in most homes. I know many people think that there is something very inspiriting and healthy about "chaff," that it is a fine old English institution, like the Union Jack or underdone beef. It may have a beneficial influence on some people, but I have always thought it was greatly over-rated as an educational factor, and that it often spells ruin to a sensitive soul. "You don't like chaff," says some one in one of Ibsen's plays. "Does anybody?" is the reply. We want to have confidence in ourselves as we go through life. Anything must be harmful that makes us timid and uncertain—and children are often very little understood by their nearest and

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dearest. I remember an instance of a merry, sturdy-looking little lad, who had taken chaff very well, and had been made rather a butt of by his family. He went to have his character told by a very clever face-reader, and she remarked that he was exceptionally sensitive—people always were who had eyelids like his and a nose which sloped in so much at the bridge. I made no remark at the time, but I thought how much that poor little child had endured. Life must have been one long torture.

AN IDEAL HOME.—I can recall one home out of many I have visited where the family meal-times are a pleasure and delight. The mother is a brilliant woman, and all her children delight to hear her talk. The father looks after everybody, and is also a good conver-

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sationalist, and he would never dream of making an unpleasant remark at meals. The children are never snubbed —they are encouraged to take a part in the conversation, though not allowed entirely to over-ride it. There is a fixed rule in that house that no unpleasant subject should ever be mentioned at meals, and they have invented a catch word to stop it. If any one begins a disagreeable subject, somebody says, "Pass the mustard," and it is taken as a hint that the subject should be changed. How much pleasanter to bring up one's children like this than to make the family meals an occasion for scolding, and a memory to shudder at in years to come.

XXIV

MANNERS IN THE HOME

THE IDEAL HOME.—I believe every woman has in her mind an ideal home—a place which is always delightful to the people who inhabit it, and also to the chance guest. Everything in order, a certain style maintained, no vulgar pretension, and no thread-bare places; nothing to dissimulate or to hide. Meals served properly, however plain the fare, servants contented and cheerful, but not over-familiar, and performing their duties with punctuality. No untidiness or commonness in anything, no vulgar fuss at the presence of an unexpected visitor,

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no violent excitement on the occasion of a dinner-party as though the whole house were being turned upside down. Above all things, peace in the household; no arguments and quarrels before company, with every member of the family trying to outshine the rest. This, I take it, is every woman's ideal, and it is possible for every woman to have it. It requires a good deal of energy, and constant care and attention, but the result is well worth it. It means a high ideal of daily life, and the sparing of no trouble to obtain it.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE IDEAL.—I don't wish to paint a picture of a foolishly unselfish woman, who is eternally sacrificing herself to no purpose, and allowing husband and children and servants to think that anything will do for the mistress—the very word a misnomer in this case. The ideal mistress is one,

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who, above all things, sets the standard for proper behaviour in the home, who knows how everything should be done, and is careful to see that it is carried out, who gives every member of her household the proper meed of consideration, and expects the same in return. She is right to pay every attention to her husband, more especially when he is the bread-winner; there are so many trials and troubles in business that the person who encounters them has a right to every possible consideration when he comes home. But she must not train her household to think she is nobody, and that anything is good enough for her; it is very foolish of a woman to countermand the usual late dinner because the master happens to be out, and to "make do" with an ill-served meal, such as a high tea, for example, which

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is equally unwholesome and unsightly. The service should be exactly the same whether it is an every-day meal or a dinner-party — the proper ideal for a dinner-party being that it should represent the ordinary style of living at its best.

ABOUT Boys. — It is very important that a mother should train her boys properly, from their earliest years. She must teach them that it is right for them to wait upon ladies. There is no surer sign of a "middle-class" point of view than when men say that anything will do for the women. In the upper classes the men may be bad in many outward ways, but they pay every mark of respect to the women of their family. Boys should be taught from the first to pay proper attention to their sisters, not to put on their hats in the house, to take off their hats when they meet ladies,

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to hand round the cake at tea, to help to change the plates at lunch. When their mother leaves the dinner-table the lad nearest the door should get up and open the door for her, and he should be taught how to carve as early as possible, so as to be able to take a little trouble off his mother at lunch, or when his father happens to be out. These things sound very trivial in themselves but their effect is important. The boy who is brought up to pay every respect to women will find himself welcome and at ease in any class of Society.

DRESS IN THE HOME.—Absolute neatness is a beauty in itself, and this should be remembered by the woman who aspires to have an ideal home. No untidy ends, no garments needing repair, everything neat and fresh, however homely it may be. There is no occasion for extra-

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vagance in the dresses worn in the house, but it is possible for them to be dainty and picturesque. Breakfast-gowns and tea-gowns suggest the ease which is allowable in home-life, and they are an actual economy as they save the smarter attire. A toilette should be made for dinner, and the meal seems more enjoyable when there are dainty dresses round the board. The mistress of the house should dress nicely herself, and encourage her husband and sons to dress for dinner. Men never look well in evening dress unless they are accustomed to wearing it every night of their lives, and it is worth the trouble for them to make the change, as it is decidedly hygienic. A dinner-jacket is always permissible for home wear, but a morning suit is not.

AT TABLE.—A woman is very unwise

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if she gives up Society too soon, for she cannot keep her table up to date if she never sees other people's ways. I lately met a woman who was an admirable mother, devoted to the interests of her children, and living entirely for them. She was so great a home-bird that she rarely left the house. What was her reward? Her eldest son told her that he would not bring his friends home to dine till she knew how a table should be laid. Her table was wrong! Spotlessly clean and dainty, but she had certain old-fashioned ways. I knew what was wrong, but I could not tell her, and unfortunately her son did too. I felt I hated him because he knew!

TABLE TALK.—I have already alluded to the defects which occur in family conversation, but I believe I have not touched upon the remedy. Members of

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large families should make a distinct effort to speak slowly, for their natural tendency is to speak loud and fast, like a kettle boiling over; and each member of a family should guard against interrupting any one who is speaking, and allow him to tell his tale his own way. How seldom does one hear a member of a family able to tell a tale uninterrupted; contradictions are thrown out from every side, and sometimes three or four people will be speaking at once. Interruptions of this kind would be considered inexcusable in strangers, and why should we be more rude to our nearest and dearest than to some chance acquaintance? As for the curious custom, which obtains in some families, of undervaluing any member who happens to possess some little talent, or to make some little figure in the world, I am at

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a loss to understand from what kind of feeling this unkindness can proceed, unless it be an obscure feeling of envy. The prophet without honour is a sorry rôle to play even for a short time. I always think Jewish people are much our superiors in this respect, for they will willingly efface themselves for the sake of the talented member of the family, and endeavour to help him instead of trying to outshine him.

ON THE MERITS OF SILENCE.—It is good to be familiar with the writings of the French philosophers, for their aphorisms are often very serviceable with regard to the conduct of life. Le Rochefoucauld said that it was very fatiguing to be polite to the same people every day, and a very deep truth lies in this. It is well to remember it when there is a tendency

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to family jars, so that we can make allowances for the natural fatigue which ensues from over-close contact with the same ideas. Occasional absences are good, and it is well for a family to separate in holiday time, and go different ways, so that fresh ideas are brought to the home for the general good. Better still, to practise Emerson's art of delicate reticence, to keep a little reserve even in the closest relations of life, so that we may appear to our nearest and dearest each morning "like foreigners arrived from a strange country."

XXV

ETIQUETTE BETWEEN
RELATIONS

AN ODD TITLE.—Some of my readers will think I have chosen an odd title for this chapter. They will say that there is no occasion for etiquette between relations, and that ceremony should be entirely dropped in the congenial atmosphere of home life. But manners start from the home, and every member of a family has duties which he should discharge towards the rest of the household, as well as towards the guests who come to the house. Women set the standard of manners, as Rudyard

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Kipling points out in his story of the cave-dwellers. It was the woman, he says, who first chose to live in a cave, instead of out in the open, and who hung a horse's skin, tail downwards, before the door, and said to the man, "And you will wipe your feet, dear, before you come in." That is the first recorded attempt at polite manners, and many things have been added since, by the woman who is mistress of her domain. The whole tone of the house depends upon her, and she should be like a queen surrounded by her court.

THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.—Some people say that a woman must not expect lover-like attentions from her husband; but surely her continued kindness demands continual recognition as the years go on. A man shows at his best when he takes a pleasure in wait-

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ing on his wife, and rendering her every service in his power. If carving is done at the table, it is correct that he should take the lion's share of it, and not allow his wife to have all the heavier part of the work. I do not say that a husband should be always jumping up to open the door every time his wife goes out, as he would do if she were a stranger; but he should open the door for her to pass out after dinner, if his sons do not happen to be present. He should carry her parcels when he is walking with her, and never allow her to lift a heavy weight in his presence.

IN SOCIETY.—A man requires a certain amount of tact to behave nicely to his wife in Society. He should find out how to look after her without hanging on to her too much. It looks *bourgeois* for a husband and wife to keep together all

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the evening, it is better for them to separate directly they get inside a room, and go their different ways, so as to make themselves pleasant in general society. A husband should not take his wife down to supper if he can help it, because it doesn't look smart for a woman to go into supper with her husband, but he should try not to take any one else into supper until he has introduced some one to look after his wife. He should remember never to precede her; the wife enters a room first, and shakes hands with her hostess, her daughters come next, and the husband last.

AT DINNER.—The head of the house is an important person at a dinner-party. His name must be mentioned in the invitations, whether they are formal or friendly in tone, and he must exert him-

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self to the best of his power to make everything go well. He usually tells the gentlemen whom they are to take in to dinner (having a paper in his pocket with the names written on for fear he should make a mistake). This is sometimes done by the hostess, but the host should save her the trouble, if possible. He has to lead the way into dinner, escorting the lady highest in rank. He places her on his right hand, the lady second in rank sitting at his left. He should not seat himself at table until every one is settled, but should stand in his proper place, till he is sure that every one is seated. After dinner he should open the door for ladies, unless the man nearest it does it at once. The men generally draw up near the host after the ladies have left, and he must see to the passing of the wine. When

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the ladies take their leave it is the business of the host to see them off, and this is his place at every entertainment, afternoon and evening.

THE RULES OF THE HOUSE.—It is for the mother to set the rules of the house, and her children should defer to them as far as possible. She must settle the hours for meals, for example, and whether people are to dress for dinner or not, and what rooms her sons may smoke in (allowing them a sufficiently wide margin in all things, if she is fond of their company). If she is a wise ruler she will study the wishes and individuality of each member of her household, and do her best to make her arrangements pleasing. Her children should try in return to conform to her rules and to respect her wishes, even when they do not entirely harmonise

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with their own ideas. I remember an instance in which some young men who were noted card-players in town never touched a card when they went home on a visit, because their mother had a religious objection to having cards played in her house. I could not help respecting the men for making this sacrifice, though it is a question whether a woman should demand such sacrifices from her children when they have come to years of discretion. Still, a woman is a queen in her own house, and it is becoming for her children to show her all possible respect.

CADETS.—There are all manners of little duties which are appropriate to the younger members of the household. There are things to fetch for their elders, errands to run, messages to carry, and guests to be waited on. All these

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things should be taught early, and the effect on the children is excellent, for it teaches them to overcome their natural shyness, and to think of others instead of themselves. The other day, when I was having tea at a house in Harley Street, I heard one of the daughters of the house reprove a young niece because she had omitted to hand the cakes, or relieve a visitor of her cup. "You ought to think of it," she said. "I had to do it when I was a cadet." I liked the use of the word cadet, implying, as it did, that looking after guests was a duty.

A COMMON DUTY.—There is one duty which is common to every member of a household — the duty of making the best of things before strangers. Whatever quarrels may take place in private, there must never be a word of dissen-

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sion in public, and friends must not be placed in the embarrassing position of "taking sides." Members of a family should endeavour to set one another off to the best advantage in company; it is taking a mean advantage to turn one another into ridicule before strangers, besides the acute discomfort it causes to the guests. Even if we cannot always be sweet-tempered in the home circle, it is our duty to be so in Society. It is not easy to be always well-mannered at home. But it is the first rule of politeness not to make strangers a witness to our quarrels, and respect for our visitors should keep us from such conduct, even if our affection for our relations does not do so.

EVERY DAY.—Every-day manners are the important thing, and the people who are pleasant at home are more likely to

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be pleasant in company. Parents should set an example of serene and agreeable manners, and check their children if they see them inclined to wrangle and argue, and interrupt another's tales. A little reserve and self-control would stop many contentions.

XXVI

CLUB MANNERS

THE LADIES' CLUB.—In old days it was the custom to say that women were not clubbable, but the number of ladies' clubs which now exist demonstrate the fact that the club is a necessity of modern life. The club being such a recognised institution, a word or two about club manners may not be out of place.

CLUB MANNERS.—Personally, I have rather a high ideal about the manners proper to clubs. I think there should be a certain *esprit de corps* among club members, that they should do their best to make the club a pleasant place for one another, and also to give a good

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impression of the place to the outsider. Supposing that a member has invited a friend to a club party and is (through some accident) absent or detained, it seems to me there should be a friendly rivalry amongst the other members as to who should look after the interests of that stranger until the rightful hostess should arrive. They should offer the stranger a comfortable seat, and books and tea — all these things would be correct although no introduction had been made. Attentions of this kind would not constitute a claim to after-acquaintance. The club member is not obliged to recognise the lady afterwards if she happens to meet her in Society (unless a proper introduction has been effected by the missing member on her arrival). The member's friend would probably make the first advance in any

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case; she would say, "I daresay you have forgotten me, but I remember how very kind you were to me the day I came to the Ladies' Club."

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.—The state of things which I have been describing certainly existed in the old days of the Writers' Club, when they were a small body, and started in a flat of lofty altitude in Fleet Street. Great pains were taken by the committee to make the Friday afternoons a success, and I remember that the members used to make a point of looking after any guests who had the bad luck to arrive before their hostesses. I do not know whether the same ideas hold good now that the club is so large, or whether it would be so easy to carry them out. It is a very uncomfortable position to find yourself in — to be in a room full of

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strangers, all busily occupied entirely with their own concerns—and I think that the members of a club ought to relieve the unpleasantness of such a situation, whether they are members of the committee or not. But I hear that there are several ladies' clubs in which no one would take any trouble about a guest supposing that her hostess were not there. If she were ever so distinguished a person she would be allowed to moon about by herself till she got to the door and could conveniently vanish.

CLUB SELFISHNESS.—A stranger once said to me that the club life tended to make you selfish, because if you did not look after yourself nobody else would do so. My heart went down as I heard this sentiment. If public life does not do away with our narrowness, and make us think more of others, have we not

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missed all the discipline of life? I don't think club life makes one selfish. There are selfish people everywhere, but perhaps one notices them more in clubs. I certainly retain an awful memory of an old lady in one club who was celebrated for sitting on the new magazines. She used to take them all to the sofa directly they arrived, and sit upon them in a heap, drawing one after the other from the pile to read, whilst she firmly sat upon the rest. I have also heard that when books of *papier poudré* for the complexion are placed upon the dressing-table for the use of all, one member will calmly walk off with the whole book—conduct which is anything but altruistic. Club members should certainly endeavour to live and let live—to take their proper share, but not to infringe on other people's rights.

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PLACE OF REST.—Too much unselfishness must not, however, be expected of a club member. A club is a place to which one comes to rest, not to encounter social obligations. If one sees a member comfortably ensconced in an easy-chair and buried in a book, it would be very bad manners to try to draw her into conversation, just because one happened to be an acquaintance. There would be no occasion for a formal recognition under the circumstances, nor would one expect her to rise. The two club members are on an equal footing, and a little nod would be enough.

CONVERSATION.—It cannot be too much insisted on that a club is not a place to air grievances in, or to talk over troubles. People come to a club to rest, and it is the worst selfishness to seize on this opportunity to deluge them

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with our griefs. A journalistic friend of mine was driven away from one ladies' club by a member who used to intrench on her leisure in this way. The latter belonged to that saddest of all classes — the gentlewoman brought up to do nothing, and not very fit to do anything. She had a sort of idea that a member of the Press had only to wave a pen, so to speak, and that work would come to her at once. Her magnetism was curiously exhausting; if one talked to her long one felt quite tired out. My friend used to go into that club sometimes, dreadfully tired with her journalistic work, and used to sink down into a comfortable chair, and take a book, anxious to rest both mind and body. She used to glance up — the poor lady was beside her! She had planted herself there with the determina-

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tion of making the most of the opportunity, and all possibility of rest was gone. The journalist had to listen to the meek complaints of want of work, and to the requests for gratuitous advertisements. Not to have listened would have been unkind, but it is hard to be appealed to for sympathy when one is oneself in a condition which demands it. Troubles and illnesses should never be chosen as topics of conversation in clubland. We should not make inroads on the sympathies of our friends. The latest piece of news, the good story, the witty remark—all these are in place in a club, and private troubles should be studiously kept in the background. Might I also suggest that if an editor goes into a literary club in the hope of a little recreation, it is the worst of bad

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taste to choose this particular moment for proposing a series of articles?

THE FIREBRAND.—Amongst the detrimental members of a club I would certainly number the firebrand. I allude to the member who is always looking out for grievances, and never so happy as when getting up petitions to the committee. One ought to be very careful with people of this kind, or one is landed into disturbances unawares. You go into the club wanting your lunch rather quickly, and you say the servants are rather long in answering the bell. Up jumps a member from the next table, with all the suddenness of a Jack-in-the-box, “Do you think so? Have you the courage of your opinion? If I get up a petition, will you sign it?” In a second a petition is drawn up, and every one present is invited to sign, and you

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bitterly repent your hasty speech. You are in hot water with the committee, in disfavour with the housekeeper, and receive very unwilling attendance from the servants, who are probably very good in the ordinary way, and extra busy on one particular occasion. Legitimate complaints must be made from time to time, but defend me from the member who is always making grievances out of nothing.

XXVII

CONGRATULATION AND CONDOLENCE

ALONE.—“Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone.” So says the poetess beloved of reciters, and there is a certain amount of truth in the dictum. But Society folk know little of loneliness, either in sorrow or rejoicing, and the measure of condolence or congratulation to be given in either case is all mapped out by certain unwritten laws. Letters on these subjects are supposed to be particularly difficult, and an excellent plan is to cut them short, if one can do so without seeming

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abrupt. A line of sympathy is enough to show remembrance, and if we drift off into a lengthy epistle we are apt to appear insincere. It is important to write as soon as we hear the news, as "he who gives quickly gives twice."

LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION.—Letters of congratulation are demanded on several occasions: on receiving news of a wedding, or engagement, or of some honour bestowed, or examination passed. Telegrams are sent in the two last-mentioned cases almost as frequently as letters, bearing some short phrase such as "many congratulations" or "delighted at the good news." If we see our friend's name in the Honours List in the newspaper we must be churlish indeed if we do not take the trouble to send a line or a wire to show him we share his joy. In the case of a

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betrothal, a letter is necessary, and the tone we must take must be in accordance with the facts. If the parents are not pleased with the marriage it would be foolish to write them a gushing epistle, or if the bridegroom has come home from the war disabled and wounded it will be decidedly out of place to write a letter full of rapturous joy. If we know very little about the circumstances it is better not to say too much.

WHEN TO CONGRATULATE.—Ladies do not write letters of congratulation to the bridegroom unless they are related to him or very old friends. They reserve their good wishes till they meet him in Society. They must write to the person who told them the news, whether it was the mother of the bride, or the young lady herself. If they hear the news by chance they do not write

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unless they are intimate with the family, and even then it will be better to offer their good wishes at the next meeting. The fundamental thing to remember is that the man is the person to be congratulated. One must offer congratulations to the bridegroom, but only good wishes to the bride. It would never do to seem as though we were congratulating the young lady on her good luck in "getting off," or her mother on her skilful manoeuvring. One can tell a man that one thinks he is lucky, but though meeting the right partner is the height of good fortune, that is not the way it should be expressed to a girl. One must say one is delighted to hear the news, and that one wishes her every happiness, and that one is sure she will have it as the bridegroom is such a nice fellow, and so much liked (if one

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can say so with truth). One cannot praise either of them too much to the other, though praise of the new relations is not always the most acceptable thing to the parents of either party.

To THE MOTHER.—When writing to congratulate the mother of the bride one can say one is delighted to hear the news, but how much she will miss her daughter. She is just like a sunbeam in the house! Here one may mention the extenuating circumstances, saying it is nice to think dear Geraldine is going to be happy, as he is such a charming man, and all his people are so nice, and what a good thing it is that the young couple are going to settle down in London, so that they will not be far off. No one is good enough for Geraldine, but if any one could be it is certainly Philip! This letter will please the

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mother, as it will exactly coincide with her views.

BIRTHDAY WISHES.—Birthday letters also come under the head of congratulations, and their tone depends upon the circumstances of the case. One would not wish an octogenarian many happy returns, or write in too jubilant tones to a confirmed invalid. Birthday letters are rather difficult to write. I know of one family in which birthday congratulations are always known as "happy-res," owing to the fact that one of them in childhood had found the writing of such an epistle such an insuperable difficulty that he had spent a whole morning over the performance, and had not got far enough to finish the words "returns."

VERBAL CONGRATULATIONS.—These are always offered to the principal parties at a wedding, first to the hostess on

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entering, and then to the young couple under the chandelier. These congratulations generally assume the form of an unintelligible murmur, which, being interpreted is "How nice you look!" "How well everything has gone off!" "Let me congratulate you very much," and the like. It does not really matter very much what one says as the bride and bridegroom are far too interested in one another to notice what any one is saying to them. Sincerity always makes itself apparent, and the true delight which some experience in the happiness of others cannot fail to make itself felt however inadequately it may be expressed.

CONDOLENCE.—Letters of condolence should be written as soon as one hears of the bereavement. Brevity without abruptness is the ideal in this case. A long letter is usually a mistake, a line

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of sympathy is enough. One may write more if one feels sure that one has some thought to express which will be a genuine comfort to the recipient, but the result of most of these communications seems generally to be this—that they leave people more unhappy than they found them. Whether the letter be long or short, it should never deal with any other subject than the bereavement itself. Many people send their visiting cards by post with a line of sympathy inscribed at the top, and this is quite sufficient if the acquaintance has only been a slight one. It used to be the fashion to write letters of condolence on black-edged paper, just as visits of condolence used always to be paid in mourning, but both these ideas have gone out of date.

XXVIII

HINTS ON CONVERSATION

WHAT TO AVOID.—It is difficult to give any advice about suitable topics of conversation, but it is easy to tell what to avoid. In the first place, I think descriptions of illnesses are very much out of place in a drawing-room, and accounts of operations are even worse. No one should introduce the atmosphere of the sick-room into the *salon*; it is as bad as though one were to walk into a ball-room in a dressing-gown. Yet how many people will describe all the details of some revolting form of illness whilst one is sipping

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one's tea, or worse still, seated at the dinner-table and cut off from all possibility of escape. Conversations of this kind are a great strain on the powers of endurance, and one often feels tempted to introduce a different topic abruptly, sooner than listen to talk that makes one actually turn faint.

TERRIBLE TALK. — Operations and broken limbs seem to be the breath of life for one kind of talker, and she is never happier than when dilating on horrors that make people's hair stand on end. Arrived in a pretty drawing-room where a pleasant little chat is going on, the good lady plunges madly into conversation with this discouraging remark: "I have just been to hospital to see a friend who has been operated on for cancer." Every smile vanishes, and the merry conversation dies away

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as the new visitor proceeds to give a minute description of the morbid growth, together with the means by which the doctors had tried to remove it. Faces grow white and weary as she proceeds, and one by one the guests get up, "fold their tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away." The poor hostess is left alone with her terrible guest, and feels that whilst her knowledge of clinical surgery has been improved by the visit, her appetite for dinner has been effectually removed.

AT ANY COST.—This visitor likes to make a sensation at any cost, and does not mind what suffering she inflicts as long as she is listened to. If she has not a friend in the cancer hospital, she will tell you of another who has fallen down dead. He was as well as possible yesterday—he looked as well

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as you do, and now she thinks of it he had much the same complexion—and he had a stroke of paralysis just as he was going to get into his motor-car, and he never spoke afterwards. To refuse sympathy would be inhuman; yet why should you be asked for it, when the story is all about a person whom you have never seen, and related to you at a moment when you are trying to forget the worries of life and aiming at getting a little relaxation. We don't come into Society to talk about our troubles, and if we are so full of them that we can talk of nothing else we had far better stay at home.

A TRYING TOPIC.—Some ladies are very fond of talking about their doctors. There was one in particular who was a great credit to his profession and an agreeable man to meet, but I learned

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to dread the sound of his name. He was a bone-setter, and clever at putting sprained tendons into place, and his patients were naturally grateful. But the horrible accounts of accidents which rose to their lips when the name of this gentlemen was mentioned have made me take an abrupt departure from many a festive circle. The talk was all of strains and sprains and injuries, the floor seemed to be strewn with broken limbs. I liked this doctor personally, but I learnt to shudder at the mention of his name.

ANTI-FAT.—I wish I could say it was bad form to talk about fat, but really it appears to be the fashion. The better the society the more talk there seems to be about methods of getting rid of superfluous flesh. Ladies discuss the methods of different kinds of diet

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whilst casting a longing eye at the temptations of the buffet. They watch you select a cake or a *marron glacé*, and they say, "I am cut off from all that now." One stout lady went so far as to cut me a piece of indigestible cake the other day, though she had nothing herself but an anti-fat biscuit. She watched me eat it with studied calmness, but when she saw me stretch out my hand for a second *fondant* her feelings became too strong — she exclaimed, "You *are* self-indulgent!" and incontinently fled. I am sure that the conversation of the anti-fat people is of great interest to themselves and to one another, but why drag in the outsider? If they only knew how uninteresting is this topic to those of normal size!

THE SERVANT QUESTION.— All our

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comfort depends upon our servants, and I don't know why they should be tiring as a topic, but they are. Terrible boredom sets in when a lady visitor (with every subject in the world to choose from), selects Mary Jane as her only theme. Her servant's characteristics may be interesting, even important, to her mistress, but it is folly to expect other people to take a lively interest in her doings and misdoings. Anecdotes about one's children have rather a boring tendency, yet childhood in itself is the most interesting of topics; and I am afraid most of us make ourselves dreadful bores about our pet animals. The loving ways of our dogs, the pretty capriciousness of our cats, are part of the joys of home-life, but we shall only weary the world if we hold forth upon them to unsympathetic hearers.

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Merriment is good, but there are certain subjects which it is not correct to joke about. Nationality, religion, or infirmity are some of these, and I think we might add age as well. There is a certain kind of middle-aged man (not very well preserved himself as a general rule) who finds his principal amusement in joking about other people's ages. If he sees a middle-aged lady who is not an absolute fossil he will say, "Enjoying yourself amongst the young ones?" or "I won't say how many years it is since I first knew you!" The discussion of unpleasant incidents should also be avoided; in fact anything which tends to make others uncomfortable should be rigorously eliminated from conversation.

How to TALK.—What shall we talk about, since there are so many topics

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which must be tabooed? Everything that is interesting and pleasing, everything in turn and nothing long; nothing that can give pain to our listeners, not sorrows, and illnesses, and troubles. Society is not a lecture-room, nor a hunting-ground, nor a dissection-room; the sick-room must not be brought into it, nor any private cares. Conversation should be bright and witty, and there should be plenty of give and take. The witty remark, the smart story, the interesting fact, the latest piece of news—all these are well in place, and the more we can contribute to the general amusement the better. Conversation should be as varied and as charming as a beautiful bouquet to which everyone who comes has brought a flower. Roses and lilies are not given to all of us, but we need not bring hemlock nor thistles.

XXIX

MEETING AND GREETING

IN THE CROWD.—There is very little occasion to describe the etiquette of meeting acquaintances in Society. We all drift about in crowded rooms, and nod to one and shake hands with another, and give a distant bow to a third. We bow to the people to whom we are newly introduced, and make some little remark to show that we wish to pursue the acquaintance. All these things are done by everybody, but the way in which they are done is everything. How pleasant some people are to meet, and how we try to get out of

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the way of others! Does not the sight of one face rouse all our pleasantest anticipations, whilst at the sight of another our heart sinks into our boots? The unwelcome person may be everything that is good and admirable, but you know that he or she puts an end to your having a good time.

HOSTESS AND GUEST.—It is generally said that a good hostess makes a good guest, and, as a general rule, I think this saying is correct. The woman who is sufficiently unselfish and tactful to make a good hostess is likely to make these qualities equally felt when she is assisting at other people's entertainments. But now and again we find exceptions to the rule, and the woman who is kindly and thoughtful in her own house is a shade too critical at other people's parties. She will make fun of the

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guests, and criticise the supper, and will make the most of everything which is wrong. She is probably thinking all the time that her own entertainments are better managed. She may be very agreeable in her own house, but she cannot be called pleasant to meet.

WITH A GRIEVANCE.—The most unpleasant person to meet out is the person with a grievance. She is perpetually looking out for slights. Most of us would rather ignore it if we thought that any one had the intention to offend us, but such an idea seems to be meat and drink to the lady I describe. You advance towards her in a mixed company, a pleasant smile on your face, and a hand outstretched. "Oh, you see me at last," she remarks, "I have been looking at you for a long time, and I thought you weren't

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going to speak." Or, "You didn't see me yesterday. I passed you when you were going to the railway station, and I suppose you were in a hurry to catch your train, but you certainly didn't seem to see me." Conversation with such a person is simply another name for explanation and apology, and by the time you have endeavoured to set her mind at rest the time for talk is gone, some one else claims your attention, and everything you had been going to say remains unsaid. You pass on, feeling rather as though you had been put on your defence in the witness-box, and had been dismissed after all with the Scotch verdict, "unproven."

SOMEBODY'S FAULT.—Our friend is not much pleasanter to encounter when she is full of a grievance about somebody else. She never asks you how you are

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or what you have been doing since she has seen you, but bursts out at once into a jeremiad about the ill-treatment she has received from some one else. A horrible man has trodden on her dress, or her publishers have treated her so ill about her book, or her editor has had the impudence to alter "an" to "the." She thinks the room is too hot, and that too many people have been asked; she had particularly wanted the hostess to have introduced her to Mr So-and-so (a celebrated *impresario*) as she has a friend as yet unknown to fame whom she would like him to hear; worse than all, the Blanks have never asked her to their party, and she can't imagine why that should be, when she always makes herself so pleasant when she goes out. A greeting such as this does not conduce to the spending

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of a pleasant evening, and one can scarcely wonder if this lady's invitations get gradually less.

THE ENGINEER.—Another trying person to meet is the one who has a talent for engineering. Whether she is your fellow-guest or your hostess she will never leave you alone. If she is your hostess she "shoos" you about like a chicken so that you cannot find rest for the sole of your foot. If she is a guest it is worse. If she sees you having a cosy chat with a single friend, or forming the centre of an animated group, she will brush your friends aside as though they were a swarm of intrusive gnats, and commence to beg your attention for a confidential talk, which is always about her own affairs. "I have so much to say to you," she says, giving the others a glance of ill-will. "I hope

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you're not too much engrossed to listen to me — and is there any particular reason why you should stay at this side of the room?" If you are weak enough to follow her, she will tear you away from your pleasant surroundings without the slightest compunction, and in any case you will find the thread of your nice conversation is broken even if she does not make your friends fancy they are not wanted, and that it would be better taste on their part to disappear.

THE BODY-SNATCHER.—A worse person still is the body-snatcher, who does not send away your pleasant companion, but diverts his attention to herself. There are some women who seem as if they cannot endure to see any other woman the object of attention, and are never happy till they have deprived her of her cavalier. I have seen a robust lady

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go all along a row of stalls from one end of a theatre to another, making every one uncomfortable as she passed them, just that she might interrupt a conversation between a young man and a young woman who had only just met, and had evidently a good deal to say to one another. I know another woman, a delicate, sweet creature with a face like a Madonna, who can be warranted to make her way across the most crowded room if she sees you going into supper with somebody you like. She spots you with one glance of her limpid eye, she undulates gracefully through the seething crowd, shakes hands without looking at you, and turns a reproachful gaze upon your cavalier, saying, "And aren't you going to get any sandwiches for me?" All your nice little talk is over, the *solitude à deux* has gone, she will shoulder

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you imperceptibly out of the way, and not infrequently carry on a long conversation with your friend, so that you find yourself eating your sandwiches in silence. Nice women don't take the trouble to engage in such an undignified strife, so the free-booter generally comes off best in little matters of this kind. Men sometimes make the mistake of interrupting a *tête-à-tête* in this way, but they do it from stupidity and seldom from intention.

THINGS TO AVOID.—The descriptions I have given above all refer to things to avoid. Put into precepts they would run as follows: Don't be selfish. Don't be a bore. Don't take offence easily, and don't go into Society to complain either of the people you meet or the friends who are absent. Don't be a spoil-sport and hunt people about when they are enjoying themselves comfort-

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ably. Don't break in upon a conversation which is taking place between two people. Try as far as possible to "assist" at an entertainment, as the French do, instead of thinking of yourself. Try to contribute your mite of entertainment towards the general good, and, at any rate, do not make your presence felt simply by making every one else as uncomfortable as you can.

XXX

MINOR POINTS ABOUT MANNERS

HOW TO PLEASE.—How to please was the ideal of the manners of our forefathers, and the same thing ought to hold good in modern Society. Unluckily, it is not so always, and I see a good many people going about whose aim is entirely different. They would probably pass over the present heading with a sneer; “How to push” and “How to be aggressive” would suit them better, finishing up with “How to have a good time.” It is certain we don’t go out to be bored; we must protect ourselves

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from the vampires, or we should not get a moment with our friends. But agreeable manners belong to Society, and are what Society is for. Our path should not be marked by a constant succession of misunderstandings and quarrels; we should not be continually looking for offence, and trying to avoid our neighbours. I know one Society woman who never seems to enter a room without making a new enemy or encountering an old one. Her life is a series of alarms and excursions, or of deadly battles, in which she calls on all her friends to take sides. The result reminds one of the career of Mr Dick Swiveller. He could not go down any of the streets in his vicinity for fear of encountering his creditors; and the lady with many quarrels cannot go to house after house for fear of meeting certain people.

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GIVING OFFENCE.—The lady just described has something of the spirit of the old duellist, and looks out eagerly for causes of offence. But many of us give offence unwittingly: sometimes from absence of mind, and sometimes from want of care. "You have not enough tact," said a palmist lately to a woman who is considered most good-natured; "you don't mean to hurt people, but you do." The lady resented this judgment at first, but when she came to think it over, she had to confess it was true. She often hurt people; never from intention, but just from want of thought. Looking back, she found these mistakes were nearly always made on occasions when she had gone into Society, completely engrossed in her own affairs, seeking advice from every one about some special trouble, and not taking

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any interest in other people's business. We should try to go into Society for distraction, and not to take our daily worries about with us like the man who was troubled with the ghost. Do you remember the story? The ghost worried him so that he packed his family and possessions into one large cart, and decided to go to the next village. "What! you're going?" cried a neighbour who was passing. "Yes; we're all going," replied a faint voice—the voice of the ghost—from the interior of the cart. "Oh! are you coming, too?" cried the man. "Then we may as well turn back and go home."

THOSE WHO SUFFER.—Absent-mindedness is a terrible drawback to social success, for the rule for Society—as for the stage—is to be always attentive to the business of the scene. But it is

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a fault which belongs to some temperaments, and I often think it is one on which people are unnecessarily hard. I have a friend who is a novelist, and she tells me that subjects which turn up in conversation often take her for a moment into her dream-country, when she ought to be listening to a harangue. She awakes to find that the momentary desertion has been instantly detected, and to hear a hard voice saying, "You're not listening to me. No; you're not! Then, what did I say last?" There is a moment's pause before the novelist produces the thread of the narrative at the point where it had been broken off, but not without a certain irritation of mind.

THE NEAR-SIGHTED. — Near-sighted people have a good deal to go through, what with not recognising acquaintances

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at a distance, and being haunted with a fear lest they should bow to some one they don't know. It is too bad to add to their troubles by affecting to believe they have not seen us, or by demanding instant recognition if our features have not been thoroughly noted on some first hasty meeting. There can be no more painful predicament to put people into than to insist on their reproducing a name which they have not thought of for years, or have possibly forgotten, or even may not have caught at the time of introduction. It is surprising that any one can have the bad taste to accentuate such a trying situation. Yet how often one hears such things going on at mixed gatherings. "Now, you have quite forgotten me! Yes; you have! You can't tell me my name! What is it, then?

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I shall hold your hand till you say it!" No one with any pretensions to good manners would ever behave like this. A well-bred person always puts this mistake right the moment she sees it has occurred, mentioning her own name with all possible rapidity, or else giving the clue by alluding to the circumstances under which the previous meeting has occurred. It is so simple to say to a person, "You remember me — Mrs Jones?" Or, "How long since we have met! Not since we both stayed at Leamington!" Relations between the parties are quickly re-established by this means. It is for the interest of all that things go smoothly in Society. It is extremely unwise to take advantage of every little mistake, and to pursue a point to the bitter end, however right one may be.

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THE HOSTESS.—Hostesses often err through a desire to do too much for their guests, and though we dislike the indolent *chatelaine*, it is possible to be bored by an excess of zeal. Pressing people to take food—the good manners of the last generation—has become the height of bad manners in this. I know a woman who cannot take tea, and whose life is made a martyrdom by the earnest endeavours with which this particular form of refreshment is pressed upon her. She has, at last, adopted a method which cannot be commended on account of its veracity, but is absolutely effectual; she calls it her only polite lie, and it consists in saying, “Thank you, I have had it.” Even more trying is the hostess who undresses you—who is possessed by a positive mania for you to take off your wraps. Sometimes

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you feel a little cold on first entering a room, and don't want to take your wrap off at once; sometimes you want to remain exactly as you are, so that you can beat a more speedy retreat. Then, again, your effect may depend on a certain jacket or boa, and you feel a poor creature sitting there in a blouse and a hat. No matter! your wrap is torn off you, your becoming fur boa is taken off to the farthest corner of the room, and there you sit like a plucked chicken, and have to take quite a long time collecting your scattered possessions before you can get safe off the premises. It is quite correct for a hostess to invite you to loosen your furs when you come into a heated room, but she should not insist on an operation which you can so easily suggest for yourself.

XXXI

ENGAGING A SERVANT

A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE.—Engaging a servant is a matter of more frequent occurrence than formerly, so it may be as well to say a few words upon the subject. In old days servants used to stay in one place so long that they became almost like part of the family, and would reply to a cautious hint that it was time to think of parting by the astounding enquiry, “Why, where is your honour thinking of going to?” But changes are made more frequently nowadays, and the tiresome business of engaging fresh domestics has to be gone through again and again.

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CORRESPONDENCE.—A good deal of correspondence has to be got through in engaging a servant, and it is as well to do it in correct style. Letters to new servants are usually written in the first person, with the Christian name and surname of the servant at the beginning, and those of the mistress at the end. The reason for this is that it is the simplest way of stating information, as anything more involved might only lead to trouble. For example :

JANE SMITH,—Your character is quite satisfactory, and I shall be glad if you will come to me on Monday morning next.
 MARIE BLANK.

This curt style would not be used with an old servant, to whom one might even begin, "Dear Jane."

WRITING FOR A CHARACTER.—The third person is the correct style in which

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to address a stranger, but it is not possible to write a lengthy epistle in this way. When ladies are writing to enquire about the character of a servant they are apt to get diffuse, so that if they try to write in the stateliest style they often find that they cannot keep it up to the end. "Dear Madam" is the best way to begin if a lengthy epistle is intended, the end being, "Yours faithfully," or "Very faithfully yours," either of which is the proper conclusion when writing to a person unknown.

APPOINTMENTS.—Appointments to see a lady to enquire about the character of a servant are generally made in the third person, as they do not require many words: "Mrs Brown would be very much obliged if Mrs Smith would see her, at any time convenient to herself, with reference to the character of

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Mary Jones," or, "Mrs Brown would be pleased to call on Thursday or Friday next at four o'clock, if either day would suit Mrs Smith." Such a letter may be written in the first person if preferred, beginning "Dear Madam," and ending "Faithfully yours." The letter should be answered by return of post, and written in the same style as the original communication.

A BUSINESS CALL.—When a lady calls to enquire after the character of a servant, she should send up her card beforehand, to show that she is simply calling on business. The same rule should guide the whole of her behaviour, and she should keep to the matter on hand. She should not branch forth into fragments of autobiography or family history, as is the way of some people under these circumstances. She should thank the lady for having spared time

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to see her, and then ask her all those particulars which she is anxious to know. But she should be careful not to take up too much of her hostess's time, and not to drag in all manner of extraneous matters as though she were paying a call on a friend.

SEEING A SERVANT.—When interviewing servants it is best to see them alone. It makes them nervous if they find themselves the cynosure of many curious eyes. It is kind to give them permission to sit down if they have come from a distance, and still kinder to give them a hint to retire when the interview is ended. People of the lower classes find a great difficulty in taking leave unless they are helped, reminding one of Dickens's characters who seemed as though he had been a boat which had been built in the apartment and was waiting for the tide before he could get launched.

XXXII

SITTING FOR A PORTRAIT

BEING PAINTED.—So many people are painted nowadays that a few words on the subject of sitting for a portrait may possibly be of interest to some of our readers. Every one is delighted to be asked to sit for a portrait, but the process of sitting demands more patience than might be imagined at first sight. It is necessary to be at the artist's studio early or he will lose the best part of the light, and this rule must be adhered to, even if the toilette which is going to be painted has to be hurriedly donned. A rapid toilette

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is not advisable, however, as every detail ought to be exactly the same each time, and the sitter who puts on her hat at a different angle may be giving the painter all kinds of difficulties for no reason. A careful toilette is essential, so I would suggest that the sitter joins the Early Rising Movement for this particular day, whatever she does the rest of the week.

KEEPING STILL.—Sitting for a portrait cannot be done without a certain amount of endurance; the pose may look comfort itself, but every part of the sitter may ache. That engaging turn of the head which looks so well in the picture may necessitate a position which brings on a stiff neck every time one sits, and the retention of the slight smile which is supposed to hover over the lips is extremely difficult to any

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one unaccustomed to pose. But a sitter would be very impolite if she laid any stress on these facts and discouraged the artist who was painting her. He is engaged in one of the most difficult tasks in the world, and should have everything to encourage him, and nothing to depress.

PUNCTUAL.—Some ladies give an artist a great deal of trouble when they are being painted by missing their appointments. They think they have a headache, or a little cold, or that the weather is unfavourable, and will give up a sitting on the slightest excuse. It is extremely hard on the painter, who may waste his morning waiting for them, and even if they wire he may still have to waste it, as he cannot get another model at a moment's notice, and could have arranged for one had

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he known. Almost as bad as the sitter who does not come at all is the sitter who comes late, so that the precious morning light is thrown away. It is right to give the artist as long sittings as he wishes for each time, as it is much easier for him to work on the picture before the colour dries.

CONVERSATION.—Sittings can be very agreeable when the painter and the sitter are congenial to one another. With regard to conversation, some painters like their sitters to talk, and some do not. A sitter grows less self-conscious when talking, and the artist is able to get valuable hints as to the expression of the face, but she should be careful not to lose the pose whilst she is talking. When the painter is evidently deeply interested in his work and getting on with it, it is better for

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the sitter to be silent. If she is sympathetic she will soon find out when silence is best. For any one not deeply endowed with tact it would not be a bad plan to adhere to the rule of the paid model who does not speak unless spoken to.

AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.—There is no occasion for a *chaperone* in an artist's studio. A girl of seventeen could go to be painted alone. She would not go to a party in the same studio by herself, nor run in to pay an unexpected visit; that is quite a different thing from the sitting, which is arranged for beforehand, and the object of the visit understood. Ladies have to go to studios because it is very inconvenient for the artist to paint them at their own houses. The light is hardly ever right in an ordinary house;

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there must be a strong light on the sitter, and also on the easel. Some mothers prefer to send a governess or maid with a young lady who is being painted, but the presence of a third person is apt to be rather trying both to artist and sitter. If a *chaperone* comes she should bring a book or sewing, so that she does not make the sitter more nervous by watching her.

THE PRICE.—Some people feel nervous about asking an artist what he will paint them for, though I don't know why they should. It is easy enough to talk these things over quietly, more particularly if the painter is a friend. A mother could say: "How I wish you could paint Gwendoline for me, Mr Mahlstick, but I suppose your prices are far beyond me?" Or she could say that a friend of hers had

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commissioned her to find out, so as to leave herself a way of retreat if the price is beyond her. But a good portrait is well worth paying for, so interesting now and so valuable in days to come. It is a pity to leave it too late. A great portrait painter once told me that nearly all the Society beauties who came to him to be painted had left it a little too late.

XXXIII

INTERVIEWING

ETIQUETTE.—And is there any etiquette about interviewing? asks the astonished reader. Is not the interviewer of real life like the one we find in novels and plays—a person utterly careless of all the proprieties, and deficient in the ordinary rules of social life? Does not he rush upon his victim without any preparation, talk to him how and where he can, and straightway put an account of the interview in print without even giving him the opportunity of correcting the mistakes? Well, not exactly, my gentle friend. The stage interviewer

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is about as much like the real thing as is the stage Irishman with his unaccountable brogue, or the stage Scotchman who is always talking about bawbees. The interviewee who treats the scribbler with scorn is happily not a frequent figure in real life. It is a situation requiring tact on both sides, but one in which all the ordinary rules of society should be observed.

THE BEST WAY.—By far the pleasantest interviews are those which grow naturally out of social intercourse. A writer happens to meet a rising young actor, a little-known artist, or some one who is starting a philanthropic society or a new kind of shop. A little conversation shows her that she is in sympathy with them, and that they have something interesting to tell. There are then two methods of procedure. Either she

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can say, "All this would be very interesting, in print. I would like to write about it some time, if I may?" or she can write to one of the editors she works for, and ask for leave to interview the person selected. It is always safest to consult the editor first, as it is annoying to ask any one to consent to an interview and then find one is unable to place it. If the subject is mentioned first to the person one desires to interview, one must always add, "I should like to write an article about you, if you would allow me, but I must consult my editor first, and see if he consents to the idea."

TO THE EDITOR.—The letter to the editor should be couched in as few words as possible, but it should give a good idea of the characteristics of the person to be interviewed. It is a good

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plan to write on a large sheet of paper, so as to save the editor the trouble of turning over the page. A description of a new person can often be more easily given in words than in writing, but if the editor wishes to see his contributor he will tell her so. If the matter can be arranged by letter it will be better. Too much visiting of newspaper offices is not well, as it takes up the time of busy men.

THE IDEAL.—If the editor gives his consent he will probably tell his contributor how she should treat the proposed subject and at what length, and then she can get to work. She should be careful not to overstep the limit as to space, as it causes so much unnecessary trouble. She should write to her friend, telling her that she has received the necessary permission from

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the editor, and ask her to make an appointment at her convenience. The reply may be an invitation to lunch or tea, but the plan should include about an hour to be spent alone with the interviewer, in which the picture (or whatever it is) can be inspected, and a quiet conversation can take place. If the two are in accord there is no occasion why this interview should be anything but pleasant. The one is free to speak of his (or her) hobby to a truly attentive listener, the other effaces herself for the time being, but is keenly on the alert at taking in impressions, and acquiring information. Pleasant memories are left on both sides, and the *tête-à-tête* may disclose sympathies in common which neither had suspected beforehand.

TO A STRANGER.—When an absolute stranger has to be interviewed the mode

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of procedure must be different. In this case it is generally the editor who requests his contributor to interview the person, who for some reason or other is interesting to the public at the moment, and the interview is often arranged from the office. The office note-paper shows the person addressed, that it is a *bona-fide* communication, and will ensure a better reception for the journalist. If it falls to her lot to have to make her own appointment she must write a short letter, very polite, but strictly business-like and to the point. She must begin, Sir or Madam, or Dear Sir, or Dear Madam, and sign herself simply Yours Faithfully. She should say the editor of such-a-paper has commissioned her to write an interview with the person she is addressing, and that she will be greatly obliged if this can be arranged, and will call at

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whatever time suits his (or her) convenience.

AN INTRODUCTION.—Well-known people sometimes like to be approached through others, and this is one of the cases in which an introduction is really useful. If the writer is so fortunate as to be able to secure the services of a good-natured friend who happens to be well acquainted with the celebrity, it will smooth matters very much for her. She does not need a formal letter of introduction, but it will help her if her friend writes a letter to the celebrity to second her request assuring him of her tact and discretion.

AT THE HOUSE. — The interviewer should be punctual at her appointment, neither too late nor "too previous." On arriving she should ask for the person she has come to see, adding, "he expects

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me," to avoid any mistake. It is as well to send in a card beforehand, as this is strictly a business visit. This fact should be borne in mind by the interviewer throughout her visit; she should endeavour to keep to the matter in hand, and not to intrude her own personality too much. Every dog has its day, but this is not hers. It is for the other person to talk, and give out his views, and enlarge upon his life and his prejudices. She must try to establish sympathy between herself and her "subject," or the interview may be fruitless, but she must do this without forgetting her dignity, or being too familiar at first sight. Most people like to talk about themselves, as long as they are sure that they are really interesting their listener, and we must hope that our interviewer is not only

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sympathetic and trustworthy, but has the art of showing that she is so. Interest in others is the power which invites confidence, and this is a thing which can make itself felt.

ACCURACY.—The interviewer must not be too much afraid of giving trouble; it is better to ask a person to repeat anything which has not been quite understood, than to run the danger of making a mistake in print. She must make every effort to be accurate, and it is to the interest of both that she should be so. There is no harm in saying, “Excuse me, but would you mind telling me that again? I have not quite understood,” or, “That is a new word to me. Is it Indian? Can you tell me how it is spelt?” It is wise not to out-stay one’s welcome, but to take leave soon after the purpose of the visit has been

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served. It is etiquette to offer to send the proofs of the article to the person interviewed, so that he can make any corrections which are required.

XXXIV

FOREIGN ETIQUETTE

BETTER OR WORSE.—Well-bred people are much the same, whatever country they belong to; but there are various points of foreign etiquette which differ so much from ours, that if we are not aware of them we may easily be at fault. In some cases our etiquette is superior to that of other countries, but there are several foreign customs which we might copy with advantage. I will briefly describe a few points of difference, without binding myself to say whether I think they are better or worse.

THE FIRST CALL.—When strangers

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arrive at a country place in England, the residents call on them at once, if they wish to show them civility. In Italy it is exactly the opposite: it is the place of the newcomer to call first. Many of our compatriots have spent the most dreary winters in Rome from the want of knowing about this rule. It is proper to take introductions with you, of course, but you are supposed to take the initiative with regard to calling on the people to whom you have letters.

IN THE STREET.—In England a lady bows first to a gentleman whom she happens to meet when out walking, but in France or Germany the man's hat flies off before he knows whether the lady intends to recognise him or not. This change of custom is often perplexing to young foreign ladies over here, who often cut their best friends

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in the street, whilst the latter are waiting, as it were, for permission to bow.

HATS OFF.—In England it is considered very bad form for a lady to take off her hat at a lunch-party. Such a thing would only be done amongst intimates. In France all the ladies are invited to take off their hats when they go out to lunch; they are supposed to be more at their ease. It is well for English women to be aware of this fact, otherwise the polite invitation to lay aside their headgear may produce as disastrous results as does the peremptory cry of “hats off” at a *matinée*. It is very trying to have to remove your headgear in public, unless you are sure that you are *bien coiffée*.

AFTER DINNER.—The ladies leave the table first in England; abroad, the whole company adjourns to the *salon*. A recent

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writer on French customs has a good deal to say upon this point, and bitterly criticises the English hostess for this practice. "Just as conversation is at its brightest," she says, "and the ice has begun to thaw, what does the English hostess do? She begins to fidget, she invites the ladies to leave the table, she cuts the thread of the conversation, and it can never be exactly joined again. Do you think that the man you had begun to interest thinks of you after you are gone? Not at all; he drinks port wine and champagne, and talks to his neighbour of horses or affairs." There is something to be said from this point of view, and it may be that the English woman will one day borrow a leaf from the book of her French sister, who certainly knows how to hold a *salon*.

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SOFAS AND CHAIRS.—In Germany, people attach great importance to the sofa, and distinguished guests are motioned towards it, as though to a seat near a throne. No young unmarried girl would venture to seat herself upon this hallowed spot—it is a privilege for her superiors in rank. A German gentleman bows to all the company the moment he enters the room. An Englishman makes for his hostess, and only bows to people with whom he is acquainted, or to whom he is introduced.

HELPING THE HOSTESS.—The custom of having assistant hostesses is an American fashion, and there is much to be said in its favour. These ladies are the relations or intimate friends of the hostess, and they come to assist her to entertain. They take off their hats so as to look as if they are at home, they

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effect introductions, they welcome the guests, take people down to tea, and even stand near the door if the hostess wants to leave her post for a while. In England the hostess is all, and the visitors are uneasy until they have spoken to her. They meet your conversation with a wandering eye, they are in no hurry to grasp your hand. They can only speak *en passant*, however much you may desire to keep them. "I've not seen my hostess yet," is the well-understood explanation for all this. When they find her it is a mere matter of ceremony: there is only time for a handshake and a smile, but they can go their own way with a clear conscience, feeling that their one little duty is done.

IN NEW YORK.—The American guest knows he'll see his hostess in good time,

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but he doesn't worry till he sees her. He is welcomed by a substitute at the door, another deputy-hostess pops a cup of tea or an ice into his hand, a third engages him with cheerful talk, or introduces him in haste to many friends. The hostess wanders at will, having earnest conversations with chosen friends. She is not chained to the oar like her English sister, to whom the door-post is like Ariadne's rock.

A COMPLIMENT.—The absence of the hat or bonnet is the distinguishing mark of the assistant hostess, and it is thoroughly understood over there. But very few English people understand it, and it sometimes leads to rather awkward mistakes. “Won’t you take your hat off when you come?” asked a charming New York lady the other day, as she discussed her forthcoming party with a

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young English friend. The latter firmly refused, evidently thinking that she was being invited to behave in strange fashion. The American looked disappointed, but left off pressing her after a while, and the English woman took her leave, quite ignorant of the fact that she had just refused to accept a kind attention and a post of honour.

EVENING CALLS.—Another point in which American etiquette differs from ours is in the fashion of evening calls. An American friend told me that there was nothing she missed over here like the evening visitors, whom she was accustomed to have in New York. In America men are busy in the day, there are no men of leisure (as the American girl told the English lord) "with the exception of tramps." The evening is their time of recreation, and they pay

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visits to the ladies of their acquaintance. When my American friend first came over here, she found a quantity of cards on the hall table at her hotel, when she came in from her afternoon drive on the first day after her arrival. "How delightful that so many people have come so soon!" she thought as she examined the stacks of paste-board. "If so many have come in the afternoon, what numbers I shall have after dinner!" She dressed herself in her prettiest toilette, sat down in her private sitting-room and waited. Nobody came! Dullness reigned supreme. It was borne in upon her forcibly how different were our fashions from hers.

RATHER AWKWARD.—This picture has a reverse side, and English people have sometimes suffered inconvenience from visits at unholy hours made in absolute

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unconsciousness by Americans. A distinguished elderly lady of my acquaintance once gave me the funniest account of an American journalist who insisted on paying his court to her when she was in a very dishevelled condition—she was recovering from influenza, was wrapped in a dressing-gown, and eating a mutton chop by the drawing-room fire. This was not the moment at which to welcome an absolute stranger from across the Atlantic, but the visitor would not be denied, having the usual persistency of people who call on one about business of their own. But to do him justice, he did not know that he was going against all etiquette by the hour he chose for his invasion; he thought an evening call was the most natural thing in the world.

XXXV

BRIDGE AND BRIDGE
PARTIES

I CANNOT close up this little book without a reference to that still most popular of all card games, Bridge, and the various forms of entertainment at which it is the chief feature. It is sometimes difficult to know how to amuse a small number of guests, and for this reason alone Bridge parties have much to commend them. They are most in vogue during the autumn and winter, when outdoor attractions are few, and the rush of the Season has not set in. They may take the form either of an afternoon party, when tea and its ordinary accompaniments serve as refreshments, or a dinner-party, with

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the game to follow, or of a supper party at its conclusion.

So general are such parties during the dead season that many people spend both the afternoon and evening of every day in play, and, therefore, it is most important for every Society aspirant to have a thorough knowledge of the game. The rules can be found in any of the numerous books on the subject, for instance, "The Complete Bridge-player," by "Cut Cavan-dish"; but, considering the popularity of this easy form of entertainment, a few hints on how to insure the success of a Bridge party may not be amiss here.

First and foremost, the guests must be punctual, for laggards keep others waiting and the tables from being made up. Again, the hostess must arrange that each set of four consists of players of equal strength; one indifferent player

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will spoil the game for three good ones, and also, in consequence, their enjoyment and their tempers—for people take Bridge very seriously nowadays.

When the guests have assembled the hostess should indicate to each the table at which he is to play, but no introductions are necessary. Scoring cards and pencils for all the players with their names inscribed thereon should be placed upon the tables, so that each may record the number of points gained or lost after every deal; it is most important to consult the score before every declaration; it is often a guide in the play of a hand, as no risk should be incurred if the game can be won or saved by the play of a winning card.

When play is over the losers should place their losses in the pool, and the winners take out of it what they have

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won, or, if a settlement at the end of every rubber is preferred, each loser should pay the player seated on his right. Dummy must not speak except to save his partner from a revoke; and it is considered bad form for him to show signs of boredom, to fidget about the room, to open a book, or to converse with some other non-player.

At the conclusion of each game the players may comment freely on each other's play, provided they can do so without manifesting too evident irritation. For example, in a modulated voice you may tell your partner how he might have made another trick, or you can accuse yourself of a palpable mistake in such words as: "I am sorry, partner, but in finessing the knave I lost two tricks."

When play recommences, however, do not allude to a former mistake, it is past

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recall and should be forgotten; persons who harp on the errors of others are looked upon as bores. Try to maintain a quiet and agreeable demeanour while engaged in the game; do not seize your winnings as if for dear life, show diffidence in accepting money from others, and pay up with Spartan briskness, no matter how great your losses. Some men object to taking money from ladies; when this is the case they should play against each other, but strict Bridge is to play as you cut.

If, to the dismay of a hostess, one guest fails to turn up in her party carefully calculated to be divisible by four, and three players are thus left stranded, they might engage in that variation of the game known as Cut-throat Bridge, which is specially designed for three players. It is played as follows:—The players cut

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the lowest deals, the highest sits on his right, and the other on his left. The dealer plays his own and dummy's hand against the other two, and after each deal the player on his right moves round into the vacant seat, so that each one deals in turns. The player on the dealer's right may not look at his hand until the declaration has been made; and in the event of its being left to dummy he looks at dummy's cards and declares for him: no trumps if it contains three or four aces, otherwise the longest suit as trumps. After which the game proceeds on the ordinary lines, except that each player's score is kept separately.

Another variation of Bridge, of a particularly sociable character, is Progressive Bridge. In this two hands are dealt at each table, and, at a given signal from what is called the king-table, when the

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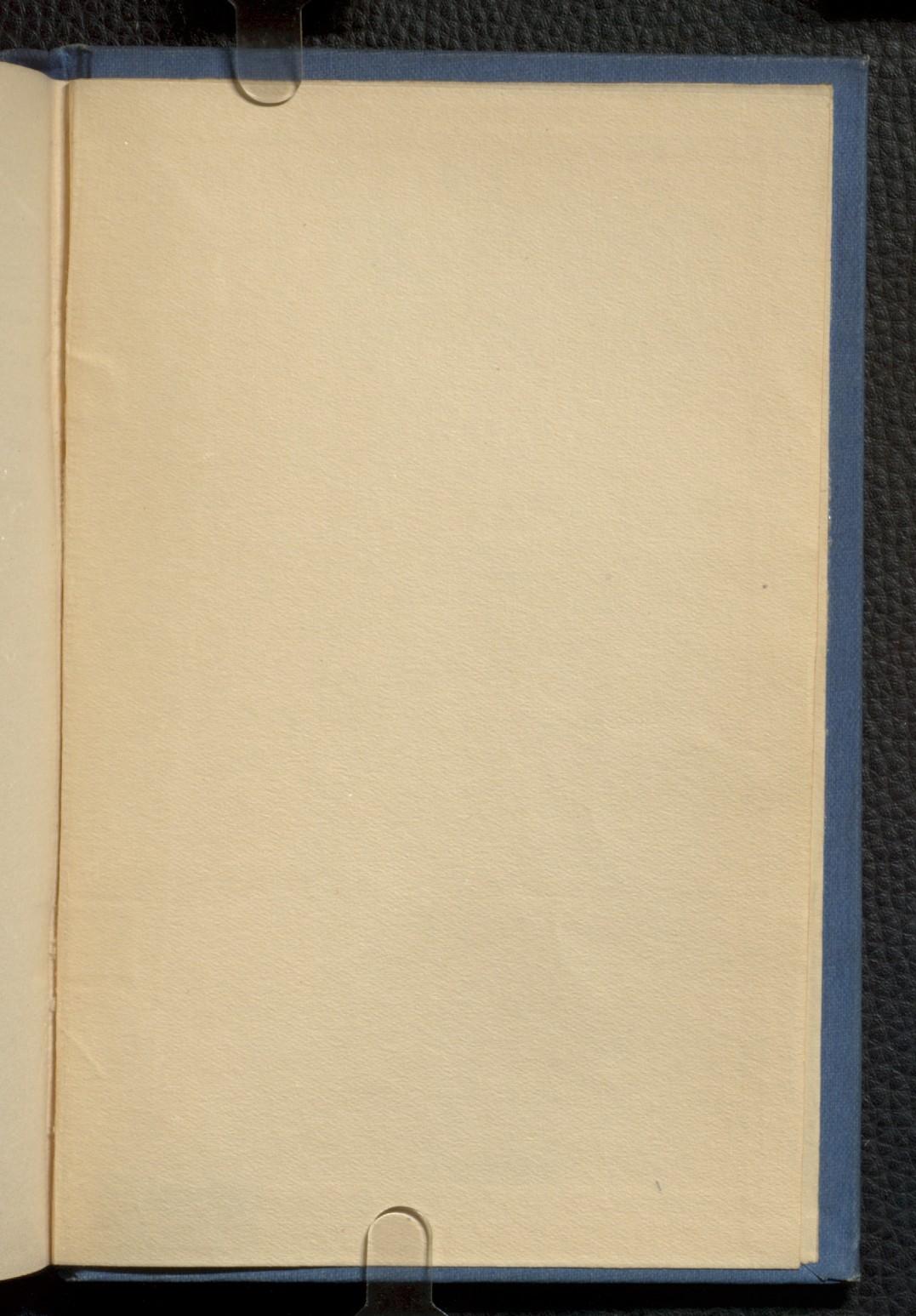
players there have finished their two deals, those at all the other tables must cease playing, whether they have finished their own two hands or not, and mark the honours and tricks scores on the scoring cards—the winners being those who have obtained the highest total score. The winners then leave their tables, the lady going to the table above, and the gentleman to that below; the lady taking as her partner for the next two hands the man she finds at that table, who was one of the losing players in the previous round, whilst the winning man claims as his partner the lady who lost at the table to which he goes.

At the end of the game, which consists of twenty-four deals, the points are added up, and a prize given to the lady and gentleman who have made the highest total score; while what is known

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as the booby prize is given to those who have made the lowest. The prize is often something silver, such as a silver-topped scent bottle for the lady, and a silver match-box for the gentleman; while the booby prize is generally some penny toy, of a more or less humorous character.

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